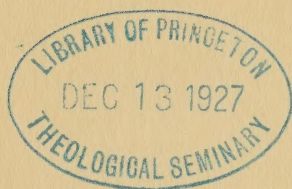


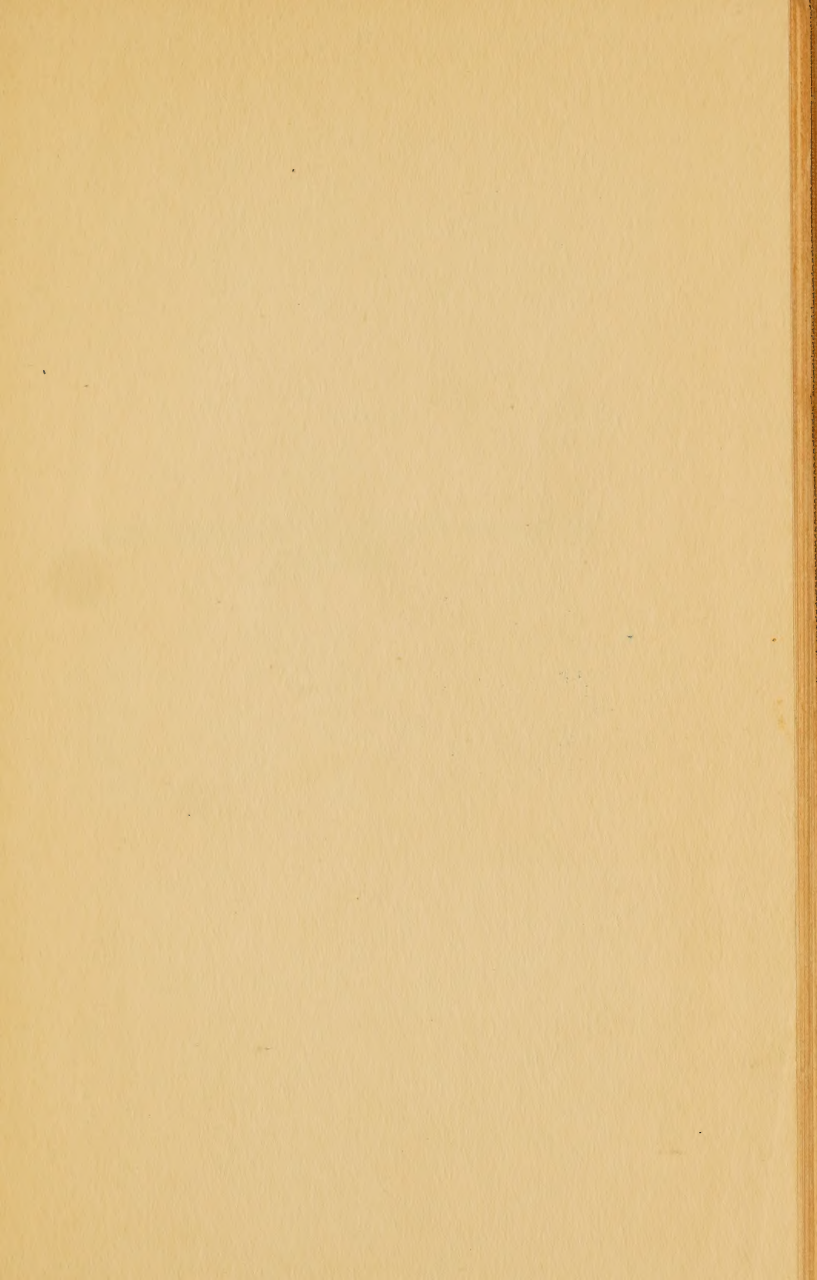
1927

RURAL
RELIGION
and the
COUNTRY
CHURCH

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WARREN H.
WILSON

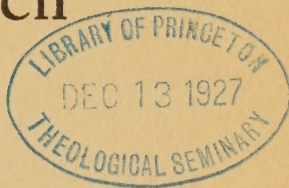


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Rural religion and the
country church



RURAL RELIGION AND THE COUNTRY
CHURCH

Rural Religion and the Country Church



By
WARREN H. WILSON

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National Missions, Presbyterian Church U. S. A.*



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I

THE FARM AND FAMILY RELIGION

IN the same years Americans have observed with anxiety the decline of the country church and the weakening of family ties. Whether one decline is the cause of the other or not, is not clear; but they have so much in common that one looks for a common cause.

The farm is a household industry. The American farm family live in the center of their acreage. The father, mother and children coöperate in the care of the cattle, and in the tillage of the crops. They have one income, one domicile and one industrial process under their care. It is a hard industry, for which a man has to be prepared by an austere mind. It is a hereditary industry, in that a good farmer is usually the son and grandson of farmers. Only by religion can families be held to the severe tasks of farming for generations, against the enticements of other careers more lucrative and less exacting.

Let us look at some of the marks of the decline of the church attended by farm families. The exodus of persons, especially of nearly all young women and of many young men, from the farms to

the towns, has weakened the country church. Their going has enriched the city churches, with some numerical loss in the process of removal. But the city church is alienated from the country. Its resources are sequestered from rural use. Instead of leading country churches and helping them, the city churches demand and secure the talented ministers. Many of them use their musical resources, their recreation halls and great Sunday schools for building up huge congregations which are an end in themselves. With few exceptions, they never return to the country round about their city boundaries any benefits of the great resources which, gathered from the land, are concentrated in the town.

The open country church has been arrested for the past fifty years, as is shown not only in its loss of members, but in its inability to provide anything else than preaching. This was the limit of provision in the time of the members' fathers, and the poverty of the pioneer has never been succeeded by affluence among the husbandmen of the present time, so that the country church remains a preacher's church till the present day. Evangelism and monthly sermons are its assured method. There never has been money enough among American farmers to provide resident pastors. The absenteeism of the farmer's preacher in the Middle West has prevailed into the Eastern states, so that there is many a vacant parsonage in New York,

Pennsylvania and New England, where once there was a resident pastor.

The worst of it is that the country people idealize their ill condition. There is a perverse strain in human nature that makes us bless ourselves in respect to our necessities. We think well of our poverty and boast of our narrow confines.

Country people, therefore, are prone to insist that the church should have nothing but preaching; they object to social service and elaboration of the work of a resident pastor which their own kinsfolk in the city are providing there. Programs that the city churches follow are condemned by country people as being wicked and unchristian. The source of this false idealization is poverty and bleak living. The cause of it is in the fact that in communities of five thousand or less in America, only one church in eight has a resident pastor on full-time service.

The resources of the Church have been dammed up into the cities which used to be pouring forth a provision of the Gospel for the pioneers. Many rural congregations which found it difficult in the past generation to pay their pastors \$1,500 per year each have been solicited for Home Mission contributions to provide salaries for city missionaries at \$2,500 per year. The city possesses an undue influence in religion and has used it, under the anxieties of the discussion of "the city problem," to halt the evangelization of the country, so that now

about one-seventh of the country communities are still unevangelized by Protestantism. In these communities comparatively few Catholics are found, and as the Catholic churches are placed in towns, it is fair to suppose that the people in these communities, one in seven in America, are without any religious ministry whatever. There are about twenty-seven million boys and girls in this country without Sunday school or other religious attention.

This appalling situation, which is not sensational enough to attract the attention it deserves, is a result of deeper causes than the neglect of the country people by any particular minister or denomination. It is rooted deep in the hearts of our people and is, I think, a result of profound changes in the institution which has made the country church—namely, the farm family—a peculiarly American feature of life.

In the years of our solicitude about the country church—that is, the past thirty years—we have become anxious as well about the American family. And well we may. The modern family has undergone changes before our time, and it is obviously being ground up into its elements today. For instance, the medieval family was a legal and religious bond, the man was the head of it, and he possessed power of life and death. He had priestly office on behalf of his wife and children. Forty years ago in America the family became, and it still is, only a spiritual bond. There is a legal basis,

but the control is not in the family head, but in the officers of the law. The obligation that holds the members of the family to one another is purely spiritual, as Miss Goodsell has shown. The loosening of the spiritual bond was evident in 1885, when there were more divorces in the United States than in all other Christian lands combined; yet in the first ten years of the twentieth century the divorces increased sixty-six per cent, while the population increased only about twenty per cent.

Children do not obey their parents. Young women prepare zealously for personal careers and regard marriage only sentimentally. The family altar is little regarded. All too few are the homes, even of church members, in which the day is begun with prayer together, or in which grace is said before the common meal. Whatever was the case in the past, there was at least reverence for domestic experiences which the present time knows not; and the ties of marriage were not lightly worn. There was a rustic austerity about American family life two generations ago, when farm life was the national ideal, which, now that city life is preferred, has become distasteful to women and children.

It is my belief that the common cause of these changes in the farmer's church, and in the American home, is neglect of the American farm family by the churches. Preachers are not given to family visitation. Many of them express a distaste for

it and candidly decline to minister to people in families. They perform in the pulpit alone or, in the smaller towns, in their offices and studies. Some churches have community centers, where the people are invited to meet the preachers and "get in touch" with the church. These are excellent. But it is the general testimony of the survey visitors, of Sunday school missionaries and of all who visit the homes of farm families that they say, "No preacher has been in our house in many years." Many country people have never been visited by a pastor.

The American farm household is an institution characteristic of this country. It may be said that it was invented in the early colonial life of America. The Scandinavian countries have, not in imitation of American states, but independently, invented the same social mode—but our spirit in the days when the frontier was no more than one hundred miles from the Atlantic Ocean caused us to invent the independent household placed on the land owned by the farmer.

Europeans and Asiatics live in villages; they go out to till the land in the morning and come home to sleep at night in houses that adjoin the houses of other farmers. The beasts and the poultry are kept in the village—the crops are out in fields. This was the manorial system; it was brought to Massachusetts and to Maryland by the settlers in the early seventeenth century; it gave character to

the New England town, and was perpetuated in a degraded form in the Southern plantation; it did not extend throughout the country. Very soon the tiller of the soil broke from the control of the manor to enclose his own part of the forest or the prairie and build upon it his house. He placed the barns near, and the pens and sheds for his cattle and poultry. He created a new institution in the world; it is on view to the traveler in any part of the United States. With some modifications the farm family is uniformly organized from the Atlantic to the Pacific. This institution is a factory in which goods are produced; it is a unique society in which men, animals and plants are members; and it is a home.

At the present time Americans look upon the farm as a factory. The national policy, represented through the department of the President and Cabinet, demands of the farmer that he produce profusely. The government is willing that he commercialize business and get an income if he can, but he is expected to produce abundance of raw materials. Since the Civil War, commercialism and manufacturing have been triumphant in this country. Legislation has favored and protected the business enterprises which give the country its character. The farmer has had no share in this, and has been made an unwilling, sometimes unconscious, contributor to the policy of commercializing the country. Now he and his household industry

of agriculture are in a profound depression, so great it is that about two million people leave the farms for the towns every year; and while about one million come back to the farm from the city and the town, there is a net loss in every recent year—which, in spite of the larger birth rate on the farm and the surplus of children in the rural communities, has reduced the rural population to a minor place under the census.

Driven by wants which advertising arouses, curbed by mortgages which he cannot pay off, competing with a tenant class whose status uncontrolled by law compels them to mine the fertility of the soil, his business commercialized so as to compete with the most powerful enterprises in the world, the American farmer is by every present-day force discouraged and baffled. He is required to have an income that he may buy the things he is expected to want, yet his income and his wealth are in living beings, not in money. His is an occupation that never did have, and never will have, an income comparable with those of trade or of the professions. His wealth is in the beasts and the plants whose value cannot be declared in money.

The peculiar character of the farm—as that of a society, in which men are enrolled with domestic animals and plants as members—gets no attention nowadays. We are a commercial people, and we read newspapers. The cowboy and the sheep do not advertise—the corn plant writes no editorials—

but it is with these creatures that man on a farm is closely associated. He has been, and his father before him, engaged in the care of plants and animals since a time of which history has no record. Before the pyramids were built or the clay tablets inscribed by the Euphrates River, before the Maya and the Pre-Inca stone-cutters labored near the American equator, man was a husbandman in the breeding and care of domestic animals and plants. Indeed, he has added none to the list of either plants or animals during historic times. The attempt of Mr. Burbank to domesticate the cactus was sensational, because no one before had tried it since man learned to write. The cow and the horse, the sheep, swine, and the cat and the dog came with man from the days of the cave. The corn plant, the potato plant, wheat, rye and alfalfa are older comrades of man than the chisel or the needle. Indeed, the corn plant has no home except on the farm. It does not grow wild, and botanists are not sure that they can recognize its kindred among the wild plants. Man has indeed subdued the ground in the taming of these creatures.

Only by close association with them can they be kept in domestication. They require to be fed, groomed, medicined, deliberately bred and nursed through infancy. They must be cultivated in order that they may be so improved that man may live off the surplus they produce. This care cannot be done by hirelings—it must be performed by own-

ers. It follows that the place of preserving the domestication of animals has a form and has customs that are peculiar. The family farm is the American form of the society in which man has this close association with beasts and plants. He knows his cows better than he knows his kin. He is more familiar with, and often more interested in, his swine than he is in his sisters. He has to be absorbed in them if he is going to make them produce enough for themselves and for him to live on, with three-quarters of their product to go into the market for the feeding and clothing of cities and factories. Farming has become an ever closer association with beasts as it has become more scientific and productive.

The farm is also a home. There has been written much of sentiment about the home, and too little sense, but it is a society of the highest interest to the social student. It might be well for reformers to leave it alone for a while, since it is not subject to social control. Wise legislators have left it alone in the past. Priests and ecclesiastics generally recognize that the forces that make the household are beyond their persuasion. The home is the center of the world to every man who has one to live in. The forces of mankind tremble and throb in its daily intercourse. It is the smallest nucleus of the world—one might say that it is the smallest group of mankind—but in it the greatest number of common stimuli secure their due responses.

These stimuli include those of kinship and locality and economic effort.

Four farmers out of ten in the United States, however, are renters, who do not own the land they till, and hold it usually upon a lease of only one year. The number of renters and the proportion they bear to owners are increasing. Here is the breakdown of the ideal farm household. Yet renters, too, live in families. The family group tills the cotton fields of the South in common. And renters are climbing the "farmer's ladder" to ownership.

One hears frequently of the breakdown of the home, but the probability is that such a small group will be always essential to the life of mankind. If no more, it would be required as a shelter for the human infant during his long period of dependence and helplessness. Some believe that this necessity of the human child was the original force that created the family and human society.

What is a home? Unknown among savages, it is equally unknown among slums of cities. A mountain cabin is sometimes not a home, when there is no regular common meal. Children require the home, for their health and moral culture. Women have made the home, as a domain in which they can, while subject and docile, rule their men and be respected. Men protect their homes, because there are the final satisfactions of life. A perfect table, enjoyed together, a bed perfectly

“made”—these give rest. A quiet place in which to be alone, yet be among the persons dearest of all—that is a home. A home must therefore have a piece of land, for it is a location and an area; it must have work, and it must have folk. It is the place in which we stay, to which we return, in which we earn and consume our living. It is the place in which we meet our kindred and friends.

No wonder, therefore, that the American home is disturbed. Our people all came, not more than two generations ago, from farm houses. We are still wise in the skill of farm chores, and our women still cook by old country recipes. Yet the farm in America is depressed, its structure put under a strain too great. Its members are whipped with wants by skilful advertisers, and curbed with mortgages by hard-faced bankers. The farm-dwellers are bidden to commercialize their industry, whose wealth and income are both expressed in living creatures, which man has cared for since Cain tilled and Abel was herdsman. The home cannot be commercialized by putting a price on hogs and apples, without putting a price at the same time on boys and girls. They are all members of the farm. To break down the farm family is to bring disquiet to all families.

There are many problems of the family. Woman is unquiet today. She wants to be an equal, yet it is required of her that she be also responsible. Then there is the problem of consumption, of de-

stroying goods in order to secure satisfaction. These two problems are met in a farm home if there be Christian principle. But outside of this sheltering and molding way of life, there is no adequate training for so many women in equality and in responsibility for expenditure. There are also the problems of education, of health, of play, of beauty, and of religion. All these have in the past been solved for us in our homes on the land. For without at least a tolerable solution of them, there could be no farm. Without a solution to these puzzles, there could be no home.

Our first remedy is proposed through the country church; departments of Protestant and Catholic Churches use a geographical remedy. We propose that the minister shall be pastor of all who live on an area of land. This is not the case in most country churches. Usually the parish consists of a small area—less than an acre of land—on which the church building stands. Besides that, the church consists of a list of members connected on no orderly pattern with the congregation as a whole, except that in general they live near enough to attend on Sunday morning.

We now propose that the pastor in the country or small village shall minister to all who are geographically within the community. This will be a revolutionary change if the church elders and college professors will coöperate in proposing community service for the church. America will have

a parish organization such as Europe used to have when the churches were established. There will be, about every five miles in the country, a minister of some denomination who lives there; to him should come all the spiritual interests of the people within a described boundary of which his church and parsonage are the center. Others may come in to hold services or to preach, and go out again, if they have a mind to, and if any will adhere to them, but the one minister is to be the pastor of all who live there.

The first reaction of the people to whom such a pastor declares his purposes has been found to be entirely favorable. The country people seem to be waiting for such ministry from the churches. Generally where it has been proposed that a minister come to live in the country near a church and make the people all the objects of his care, there is in the first year a greatly increased subscription to his salary.

The second reaction is a more surprising one—they bring to him all their spiritual interests. To the pastor of a “Larger Parish” the people bring problems in education, in recreation, their needs in the way of health, and sometimes, though not so often, their problems of agriculture and of the struggle to get a living. Such great pastors as Harvey Murdoch at Buckhorn, Kentucky; Harry Bicksler at Lingle, Wyoming; Charles Christensen at Novato, California; and John Scott King at

Little Britain, New York, have found their shoulders not broad enough to carry, and their minds not wise enough to solve, all the perplexing burdens of their people. Religion has suddenly become intensified in this community into which ministers have come to live with an avowed purpose of ministering to all.

Of course, it must be said, to avoid misrepresentation, that these pastors do labor for the regeneration of their people, for their conversion to the faith of the pastor himself, and for their enrolment in church. Upon the members thus enrolled they lay, as far as they may, the burden of the whole community, but they do not restrict the calls or their care to these members. They extend their care to all who live on the land for which the church exists, and they do not indulge in vague statements as to the world being their parish. They map and describe the territory tributary to their church, and declare their purpose to minister to the people living on a section of the surface of the world. Their pastoral care has a definite relation to geography as well as to a society.

This way of ministry connects the pastor and his church with the home by ties like unto, but not identical with, those that enroll the individual in the church. It follows that the minister must restore the old custom of family visitation. Of course, if he is a Catholic priest he can expect the people to come to him and confess. Some Prot-

estants claim that they are restoring the confessional, but they are using figurative language. There is nothing in the Protestant system, nor can be, to take the place of family visitation. It follows that the pastor who sees the importance of the farm family must put his foot inside the farmhouse door—must stay long enough to connect up his work at the center of the community with the household and all its members. In order to do this he must systematize his time, and devote in every week a deliberate portion of it to family visitation. He must go from door to door, ignoring none, preferring not even his members or the officers who support him, but reaching the door of the stranger, the alien, and the man of other faith or no faith, as frequently and as sincerely as those who confess in the same terms as himself.

The effect is profound. The method of accomplishing this development of a "Larger Parish," however, and of maintaining it, involves a deliberate plan and a clear-sighted understanding of what is the connection of the community with the family. I suggest that this connection is a bond made up of four or five strands. The minister has a right to inquire, when he calls at a farm household, about the health of the people, about the education of their children, about the play life and the enjoyments of the community in which they are interested, and about their agricultural and industrial welfare. He has a right also to urge that they

go to church, and to invite them to come to his church.

All these five are interests by which a pastor resident in a community is attached to any family whatever. They should be the table of contents of every call made by a minister on a family. As he comes to know them better, he will have particulars, but he had better confine his interest in the family to these classes of interest, lest he become an intruder, or waste his time, or make himself unwelcome.

He should not always expect to pray in a family, but should be ready to do so when occasion arises. He should not expect to tarry long, as if to make a real visit, lest he give the impression that he comes to the house to rest and with a social preference for the people who live there. His usual visit, when nothing prolongs it, should be from fifteen to twenty minutes in length, and he should keep the conversation under his own leadership while he is in the house, and he should promptly depart. Of course, when sickness, trouble, or particular cause detains him, he should be ready to remain and minister as he may. These cases will be frequent, indeed. He will soon come to know that the family of the Catholic and of the unbeliever give him as warm a welcome as enrolled members of his church, provided he knows how to call on all persons under the limitations of courtesy and restraint suitable to his position and his work.

Rev. William F. Peters, of Morrow, Ohio, says in regard to his calling upon his people:

“About the pastoral visiting, I have finished the country districts and last week started in the village. I have visited 341 families in the country, traveling about 450 miles in and out of lanes, over some of the roughest roads where only a ‘flivver’ could go. The people told me my flivver was the only one they had ever seen on some of these roads. Among the 341 families visited there were about six Catholic and five Negro families.

“I have been treated with uniform courtesy. Large groups know me at least by sight, because I have been here six years, spoken at Farmers’ Institutes, etc. Another thing: I know all the rural mail carriers well, and I talked over this plan with them, asking about the people, the roads, etc. They were intensely interested; the people would talk with them after I’d been through a district, then they would tell me what had been said. I find the plan had set people talking, and most of them thought it a good thing.

“Now for the types of people I have met out in the country. Some were of the finest, the intelligent and cultured class. There has been an influx of Kentuckians, however—crude and unlettered; primitives, I call them. Some of these live as if in the Garden of Eden, the children with not a stitch of clothing, hardly any furniture in the homes, no cultural background at all. I was shocked at the

conditions. In thinking things over, however, I feel that my country group—I call them mine—have a high potentiality. Some may be very crude, but they haven't had a chance.

“Not the least of my experience is with the dogs. You ask how I approach the people; before I meet the people, I must meet the dog, for every farmhouse has a dog. I like dogs, and have never retreated yet, except once, and then it was not a dog but a ferocious billy goat that put me to flight.

“Why is it that the Church has lost influence? Why don't people attend? There are fifty reasons we can advance, but as I have been visiting and talking with people I have come to the conclusion that perhaps we have a wrong conception of the function of the Church. Again and again they talked of the church ‘where you learn to do right,’ ‘call sinners to repentance,’ ‘get salvation,’ ‘it won't hurt you to go’—phrases like that I hear continually. Now, I have no quarrel to pick with these conceptions, but they don't go far enough. Gradually, as I plumbed beneath the surface, saw the sorrow, felt the terrific struggles going on, realized the rush and tear, the stern facts of life, there emerged a different conception of the Church. The Episcopalians and Catholics have a word that I like—‘retreat.’ Isn't the Church a place where we can go once a week or oftener, separate ourselves for the time from our daily work, receive a new point of view, burnish tarnished ideals, get comfort

and strength, and go back to the tasks of the week better fitted with courage and hope? I wonder if the Church couldn't be made the 'still waters' that the Twenty-third Psalm talks about, which men can lie down beside and be refreshed. If I am right in this conception, Church attendance is an absolute necessity. So far I have only tentatively introduced it, for it has been slowly growing on me. I am beginning to organize my preaching in line with this concept."

I think that no force would do more to build up American agriculture than for the ministers who preach to farmers in American villages to adopt this plan, and to consecrate themselves to the people who live on the farms—this consecration being expressed in the visitation of every farm within two miles of every place in which they preach, at least four times each year. The great need of American farm life is cheer, encouragement, and spiritual ties. Even those who, as representing the United States Government, study the standard of living on the farm, are not sure that "what the farmer needs is an income." They question whether to live to spend and to enjoy is not the dynamic force which gets the income out of the soil.

Family religion will produce a community program. The people to whom a pastor announces himself as the friend and minister of all bring to him all their spiritual interest. This fact he must recognize in service institutions. He must set up a

community house for their pleasure, he must labor for the improvement of the schools where poor ones or none exist, and he may even be required, as many European pastors were required in the last century, to organize credit associations and coöperatives for the people's economic betterment. The American pastor ought to be, more often than he is, a promoter of health and an organizer of health centers and hospitals. Rev. Paul E. Doran, in middle Tennessee, near Sparta, has found it necessary to take economic measures for assisting his farm renters to become farm owners. He has organized a poultry coöperative and a potato coöperative in Sparta, the shipping point, to get his people better prices. He could not resist doing this because he was pastor of all, and there was no room for his gospel in the pinched and constrained life of a one-year tenant on a deficit farm. He had to build a farm family big enough to contain the Gospel he preached, and to do so he had to take off his coat and become an organizer of better marketing and better credit.

Harvey Murdoch, in Buckhorn, Kentucky, ministering to an impoverished mountain people, but a people who love their land and will not leave it, has found it necessary to organize orphanages, hospitals, model farm, playground, and school. These institutions make up his community program. The present-day family cannot satisfy its members under its own roof. One of the changes

coming to pass is that the family is no longer self-sufficing. I note that its legal and religious bonds are quite unloosed for centuries past; its economic unity is breaking down, and each member is seeking his own income, so that the family is insufficient for its various members as a center of their successes. They cannot stay at home; even the woman must go out of doors to satisfy her spiritual needs. The community, therefore, must supplement the family in common satisfactions, and the church is often required to provide these satisfactions, or some of them.

We are not sure nowadays whether this is the permanent function of the Church or not. Many ministers insist that just so soon as anyone else will provide recreation, education, and economic improvement, the Church should leave off doing so. I do not know whether or not the Church is becoming a greater institution, and whether it will continue to minister in the respects of health, agriculture, recreation and education. Probably the Church will prefer to stimulate others to do these things and will keep the narrower path of preaching and worship for her own. Considering the defects of human nature, if nothing besides, one must admit that this is the best. But the Church that would promote family religion, and through the family serve the nation, must keep the way open and cherish the right to extend her ministries to the satisfaction of spiritual need.

The supreme purpose of a Christian worker in the country must be the glory of God and the enjoyment of the Christian life. It is a state of mind and heart suited to hardship, austere, reverent and diligent, that the pastor brings his people. It is not easy to be married, nor is it easy to till the soil. Both these experiences require the same reinforcement of the spirit. The Christian religion offers these energies, and they must be delivered at the door, discussed in the presence of husband and wife, and taught to the children by men of God and by the officers of churches, within the walls of the household, if the American family is to be maintained and its place of abode is to be a home. I believe it is in the ministry to the individual, through preaching the Gospel to him and welcoming his confession of faith, that the Church best serves the nation. Her best fruit is in consecrated and godly citizens.

II

TEACHING CHRISTIANITY THROUGH A GRAIN OF RICE

THE missionaries who come through New York from all lands are beginning to inquire about the consecration of the soil. One came recently who has been for thirty-one years in Alaska. His Thlinkit Indians are fishermen, but the supply of salmon has been monopolized by great companies, who pay wages to the Indians for labor but leave them none of the profits. The missionary sees that in order to establish his people in Christianity he must make them agricultural. He says there is rich deep soil at hand, and on it can be raised certain crops—strawberries, potatoes—by which the Indian family could sustain themselves all the year round, while they work for the company for wages in the short season of the salmon running.

Everybody knows Sam Higginbottom, who is striving to make the East Indian a good farmer in order that he may become a good Christian. In China, near Canton, where the farmers and all the people live by the silkworm, Professor Howard has by years of selective breeding produced a silk-

worm that is immune to the diseases and able to resist the parasites whose ravages impoverish the farmers. He is Christianizing the silkworm. There is a Japanese teacher in Sumatra, graduate of Professor Howard's classes, I believe, who says he is teaching Christianity to the people of Sumatra by means of a grain of rice.

This idea of teaching Christianity to the soil and the plants arises when men realize that the religious life is incomplete without a church. Many Americans have no religious conception of the Church. To them religion is only of the human soul. Those who live in cities have churches, however, for in the pressure and change of cities men have to belong to congregations. They cannot maintain a faith solitary, as country men think they can. The city people consecrate money because they recognize that you cannot have a church without money. But the country man, who sometimes has no use for a church except as a place to meet in, does not consecrate his means of subsistence, which is the soil. He holds it for sale, for cash, and his church with it. To him soil is dirt, and animals and plants are mere sources of money; just goods, not good. There is no work of God in them; they are secular because only the soul is sacred.

The reason given by missionaries for engaging in the promotion of better agriculture are usually opportunist. The Roman Catholic Church is perhaps

foremost among religious communions in using the authority of the parish priest in America to build the country community upon a better agriculture. Father Nell, of Effingham, Illinois, was unwilling to admit, after a recent address in which he described his methods, that he did such work for any other motive than "to find a point of contact." He showed also that by it he retained the boys in the community, established Christian homes and supported his parish. Evidently it had spiritual values; but like a true American he was unwilling to be sentimental about it.

Dirk Lay, whose Pima Indians have had good soil but no water wherewith to make it productive, has fought a long fight for the agriculture of his people. He professes no mystical love of the soil, no poetical sense of the beauty of the cotton plants he hopes to see waving in the Arizona sunlight. He is no Francis of Assisi, to sing a canticle to the cotton-boll.

Harvey Murdoch, who at one time introduced a better breed of hogs to the Kentucky mountain farms, would probably declare that his purposes were expressed not in any sense in a liking for hogs but rather in a liking for fat pork and ampler diet of an ill-nourished people.

Thomas Jesse Jones recommends agriculture as a part of the education of Africans; and perhaps he would look deeply into the vital relation of the cow to the black man. It may be that Dr. Jones,

who has for years reflected upon the needs of the Negro in America and in Africa, sees nothing more than expediency. It is possible he sees a great human experience in the relation of man to the land. I do not mean something mystical, but a source of philosophy. Certainly he sees a sociological relation of the land in its relation to man, and of the man in his relation to land. He has, like all social students, learned to interpret the American Negro by the cotton plant, and to bound the territory of the cotton plant by the presence of Negroes. He would probably agree that the religion of the Negro is an expression of the cotton plant quite as much as of the African temperament.

There are a great many missionaries who use agriculture as a means of teaching Christianity, but do not say so. They look upon it either as Father Nell does, "as a point of contact with their people," or they see the practical necessity of improved agriculture for the securing of a necessary income. There is a Congregational Academy in Southern Missouri which without any theorizing about it, for it is a school of classical learning, maintains an excellent farm and uses student labor very wisely to supplement the income of the Institute. There is a Seventh Day Adventist school near Nashville, Tennessee, which has built its educational business upon six hundred acres of excellent land. I do not know that they have a feeling that God works with them in the land, but their

faculty has teachers of rare scientific attainment. Their economic organizations are exceedingly wise and practical, and the dependence upon the soil for all the wealth of the Institute is complete. They have committed themselves to those six hundred acres, and upon them, with student labor and by the sacrifices of the members of the faculty, they have maintained a school of about two hundred persons for several years.

In spite of the pragmatism of mind which characterizes these American missionaries who till the soil, I cannot but believe that they are practicing a doctrine of divine creation. That doctrine is known and confessed by us but not practiced; we do not give to it the attention we bestow upon regeneration. Indeed, it is more common for church people in America to discuss what we call recreation, a practical theory of play and games, than creation. I have never heard an evangelist, indeed, I have never heard a preacher, solemnize the work of God in creation. The continent we live on was so amply stored with raw materials that we have never until now been obliged to think also of the parsimony of the hand of God. We must now study the creation of God, in view of our greatly increased population, the enormous growth of cities and the consequent food problem. The time may come when in country churches the minister will sanctify the soil by petitions for help in paying mortgages and for strength to win in the battle

from tenant to owner. When that time comes this will be a holy land.

The motive of planting the gospel in the soil is the desire to give glory to God. It is an old saying that I was taught when I was very young, that "man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever." That is the end of agricultural missions—God's glory, man's enjoyment of God's glory in a church, and the permanence of the family in a worshiping community. The glorifying of God dwells in homes and churches and communities. The glories of religion are for the soul, but the tributes of man to God are paid in godly homes and peaceable, happy communities. In the country the home is a farm. The cattle and the plants are members of the household and essential to the community. God has a blessing for them. He has love for them of the same sort as, though less in quantity than His love for ourselves, for He made us both with equal perfection. The Christian community and the Christian home will be those in which the land is held not for speculative sale but for the Church; in which the cattle and plants are treated as creatures of God from which we can learn about the Creator.

It is possible that the secularization of wealth in America is a result of our fight with the wilderness. Our fathers had to conquer the wilderness with violence, and they called God to their side in the fight with Indians, trees, wild animals and the

birds of the air. They cursed and hated all living things, because all opposed and none was friendly. Man alone was their friend, and so man alone seemed spiritual. So it was to an old Pennsylvania lumberman, who said that the men who had "lumbered off" the land hate a tree and cannot be won to replanting or reforesting the lands they have devastated.

As our wealth is derived from agriculture, timber, mines and fisheries with such tragic toil, it is, therefore, not in American minds blessed but is accursed, secular; there is no divine value in any animal. There is no spiritual beauty in a mine. No preacher has interpreted to ranchers the Psalms, which were written by a herdsman, or a shepherd.

Our day, however, is seeing the rising sun of knowledge of nature. The reading man, even if he reads only a good daily newspaper, is looking far and wide upon a world that the telescope alone sees, and into a depth of existence revealed by the microscope. He wonders about God, who has made for His pleasure so many creatures unlike man, rivals of man, yet perfect, endowed with intelligence for their own way of life, and with morality suited to their condition. It would seem that God must have pleasure in and even love for these creatures of His, since He has made them so numerous and perfected them so lovingly. Then there are vast regions in which man cannot live

and does not; wastes and deserts on the earth such as are described in the Book of Job, which are not fit for mankind's use and cannot be subdued, are not indeed owned by any man. The stars and planets discover no place for human life, and the suns and stars could not by any stretch of imagination be tenanted or enjoyed by ourselves. It would seem, then, that God has a mind bigger than man's understanding of Him hitherto. It is very natural that religious men of our time pass on through interest in souls to interest in soil.

Then, the experience of mankind in ages of intimate association with animals and plants in agriculture has induced many thoughts about the indwelling of God in these creatures, sometimes called lower. Unlike city life, where all is done by machines, the life on the farm and in the caravan, of the herdsman and of the shepherd, is adapted to the life of the ox, the sheep and the camel. Their religion naturally expresses itself in reflections upon the beasts as God's beasts. It may take the form of the analogy of the Psalmist, who said God was shepherd and man was sheep; or it may be the sublimation of the beast, as in the vision of Ezekiel, who saw heavenly beings with the face of a cherub, the face of a man, the face of a lion and the face of an eagle.

There have been great persons of our generation who testified, as did Stanley Hall, that it is well for a psychologist to have been on a farm in childhood

because then he learned the ways of the mind first from observing the minds of beasts. And Helen Keller recalls that before she was taught to spell by Miss Sullivan she was taught to think by a setter-dog and by the cows in the farmyard.

Many great religious spirits besides Ezekiel among the prophets have included the beast in the divine order. They are commanded to obey the Sabbath and are protected by the Mosaic law. Our Lord declared the love of God to mankind and proved it by God's care for the sparrow. He even disclosed that God cared better for the lily than He did for mankind, for He said that even Solomon in all his glory was not so arrayed as God clothed the lily.

The chief reason for including animals and plants in the round of religion is that they are part of our life. We cannot live without them. Bread and meat we must have. We cannot eat dust; the plants eat it for us, and we eat the plants. Yet plants have life; they are living things. The same life that is in us is in the apple that we eat, and we eat it while it is still alive. Animals eat plants. Like us, they cannot subsist upon water and rock-dust, as plants can subsist. And we eat both the plant and the animal.

Now, there is a popular and sentimental recognition of God's presence in the wild life. Some "worship God in the trees and on the wild prairies and the moors." Farmers, on the other hand, de-

spise such sentiment, and regard trees and beasts as "just so much money." But the holy land is tilled land. The true place in which to worship God is the orchard and the garden; for there we coöperate with God and so may glorify and enjoy Him. For the round of life that passes through our bodies and makes them a temple of the Holy Spirit passes through the orchard trees, the garden plants, the cattle in their stalls and the sheep in the fold. If they were not there, we could not glorify God, for we could not live. So their bodies, too, are temples or vestibules, porches of the divine presence in the world. Naturally we cannot have churches, nor can we even have a "beloved community" of believers, unless we care for our bodies and their bodies. For true religion dwells in them and us together.

Certain effects would follow if we revered our religious fellowship with animals and with domesticated plants. In the first place, we would have mercy and regard for them—now we treat them sentimentally and cruelly. We do not have for animals the same reasoned reverence that we have for mankind. We obey the Scripture with a ruthless and unscrupulous hand in subduing the earth and ruling over the beasts.

Second, we would not kill animals wantonly, or waste forest trees as we do, if we had religious reverence for the bodies of animals and the trunks of trees on the same principle as we have reverence

for the human body. Forest fires would be brought to an end, and the shooting of birds by country boys would be forbidden. The killing of animals would be surrounded with restraints. It is quite possible that the high murder record among Americans has a source in the ruthless and merciless killing of birds and beasts by country boys and men. Even now every man and boy in the open country possesses a profusion of firearms. Foreigners who come to our shores purchase a pistol and a shotgun just as soon as they can, and among the mining towns in which they have settled, every bird and beast is as a rule destroyed.

Respect for animal life in the same way as for human life would sanctify the farm family. It would give a religious sanction for the barn, for the house, for the other buildings where hogs, poultry and sheep dwell, and for the bin in which the corn lies sleeping through the winter, and for the sacks of apples and potatoes that live in the cellar. If there was reverence for these because they are the work of God's hand, there would be a religious bond in the farm family which now it lacks. The drastic individualism of the past century has undermined the family in declaring the soul a solitary religious unit, but the experience of tilling the soil in coöperation with these lower creatures domesticated has a religious value that ought to be declared.

Fourth, such a religious fellowship would tend to

consecrate all wealth, since these living goods would have not merely a money value, but a sacred worth giving them rights and obligations. The simplest, most dramatic and suggestive of all economic processes is that of extracting raw materials from the soil, from the sea and from the forest. The effect upon the mind and conscience of men would be therefore great, if we recognized the work of God in this creation.

But, someone will say, if we admit that God loves beasts, we cannot kill them; if we recognize the potato and the cabbage and the apple in a religious fellowship ever so dim, we cannot eat them. In answer I would say that there is never any necessity of carrying a truth to its extreme logical end. We must live by these lower creatures, and the necessities of our existence will balance the logic of our doctrine. For instance, we believe that all men are equal, but we do not hesitate to hire and exploit laborers. We have no other way of carrying on an industry by which we live. In the same way we will continue to eat the potatoes and the animals when we have registered the fact that they are God's creatures and like unto ourselves. When we have consecrated the soil we will still continue to plow it. There is no danger that a people practical like ours will go to the extreme of believing, as they do in India, that the cow is sacred and must not be slain, that the scorpion has a soul and must not be stamped in the dust, that

the serpent must not be killed because it may have the soul of a man in it. From these mental dangers we will be saved by other connections and by common sense.

But the dependence of man upon the lower creatures is the very reason for consecrating these creatures that we eat, since they are a part of our bodily life. The round of human existence depends upon the round of their existence. They are bodily one with ours, and it is in this organism of vegetable, animal and human life that the Spirit of God dwells and works.

Therefore it is philosophically right as well as practically necessary that the missionary should turn to agriculture. He must not be deterred by fear of false sentiment from action which is not sentimental but both practical and philosophical. The man who tills the soil is practicing the doctrine of creation; he is reverencing God as Creator, whereas the preacher is exercising himself under the doctrine of regeneration. The one process is as valid as the other, and in the days to come in missionary lands the necessity of practicing the doctrine of creation will increase.

III

SPIRITUAL COMMUNITY ARTISTS

THE discovery of a farm in an eastern state on which the ox is treated as a work of art has set me thinking of the artists I have known who beautify the country community by use of native materials. One man changed a sluggish watercourse and a marshy meadow into a lake that makes of sky and trees one picture, for eyes that do not look up. Another has erected a building for play in a place where hard work will be the lot of all for years. Another has organized his neighbors in erection of monuments to their ancestors—who are not really his ancestors, except that he owns some of their historic land. Another, a lawyer in an inland city, by the lure of wealth, has attracted ambitious souls, most of whom have failed to get riches, has amused himself by giving careers to dull persons, rich and poor, who would never have seen themselves in noble guise if he had not painted their careers for them, to their spiritual peace.

The ox-farm is in western Connecticut, where recently every other farm had a yoke of these patient cattle, symbols in their patient tread of the

toil that made the state one which now is one of the most beautiful places for living in America. Their fat sides were tokens of the sacrificial life of the farmer, who forever feeds other men. At the town and country fairs of New England you will see these cattle every autumn "trying out" their strength in tests of pulling and of discipline, under the long ironwood whip of a tall silent driver; while all the farmers and farmers' sons of the former generation, stand about for hours as if pondering the mystery of man and his domestic beasts.

No exhibit at these fairs is more popular. Hour after hour these sleek cattle stand, yoked in pairs, in beautiful leisure, some of them taller than the six-foot driver who manages them with a low word and a touch of his short lash on flank or neck, and at their turn they pace to the stone-boat and stand ready for the pull. The fascination of this contest is surprising, in this day when speed and flexibility are advertised so profusely. It is evident to motorists who look on that their grandsires, too, had power and precision. There is here a showing of the joys of fine work that made the former days proud.

One day, returning from Washington Fair, I passed a long line of these oxen hitched to a two-wheel cart. First we passed, in front of the cart and yoked to the tongue, a huge yoke of champions; then a lesser pair; then on the long chain

at least ten yokes of "stags," until at the front were small steers and calves, all yoked and treading slowly along; and at the front was a stout Devon bull, father of all these sons, wearing a single yoke and leading them home, to the farm where they had been bred and broken.

Later I learned about this farm, and visited it. There is nothing of the advertised show-place about it, yet it has "a path worn to the door" from far places. "Old Nate Beardsley" and his son Percy have kept it like an old Yankee farm, as indeed it is. The house is painted white and stands under fine trees. The barns and yards are neat and in perfect order, as the ancient Yankee farmers kept their places. Every corner of the traditional rail-fence is free of weeds. Percy splits rails—"the only respect in which," he assures you, he is "like Lincoln." The hundred acres of pasture, "cold land," some would call it, are vividly green, for there is plenty of fertilizer for these acres, as well as strength and will to haul it and spread it. To one who knows what good farming is, and lives in a city, the very sight of these well-tended fields of grazing and of hay brings delight. One is glad that someone cares to keep an old farm "looking good." The latches are all on the doors, and every passageway in the barn is clean, every floor swept, the yards orderly enough to satisfy your grandfather.

It was evident when we had sat a brief formal

while in the house that Percy was an artist, for he made only this apology for his creations, that they "were not in shape at that time of the year." Then he took us to the barnyard, where stood or lay six of his oxen. He got his tall whip, from a sheaf of them attached to a timber on the barn-floor, and stepped into the yard among his cattle. At a quiet word and a touch upon one and another, they rose and paced into formation, like soldiers—some chewing their cud, all of them placid and precise, like the professors of a college faculty moving to the platform at a commencement. One thought at once of all the centuries behind our own people, in which such teams of massive beasts had been man's companions in the forest and upon the cleared lands. They stood ready under Percy's hand, unhasting, in their precise places. I thought of the logs that lie now and rot in the woods, which no power but that of the ox could move. I wondered if the automobile is really an economy, if it is even a power. That day I doubted that the tractor will make us as rich, or that gasoline can make us as efficient, as the ox made our parents. But I said none of this to Percy. He stood quietly smiling and laid his hand on one of the broad necks with the air of a man who has attained. And Percy drives a very good car himself.

Last summer I saw again the other high artist, the lawyer. I have known him many years. Indeed, I am one of the dull folk to whom he held up

his magic mirror when I was a boy of seventeen. He was on this occasion presiding at the hospital commencement in his small city in Pennsylvania. It was unlike most commencements, somehow, for though there was no tension there was yet perfect arrangement. He seemed to have no plan, for artists appear often to be disorderly—and are not. Some of the men wore evening dress, but the most were sober old fellows, whose names as I met them awakened memories hard to recover. I looked at one fine old face and said: "What a beautiful old man!" I learned the next day that he has made a great deal of money, and, after years of penurious management in the business that I dimly remembered, has learned, from association with the lawyer-artist, to give fifty thousand to the hospital for a children's ward and a maternity ward—the old man is childless; then forty thousand for a manual training equipment for the public schools—I recalled that he was an expert mechanic with exquisite skill in making tools. But before I was told all this I had marveled at the peace and beauty in the strong old face, and wondered at the tie between these old men. In the end I saw that the old lawyer had given the touch of dignity and beauty to that American product, a self-made man, and had adorned with meaning a man of that type so often disillusioned and discredited. His business associates, I learned, had but recently given him a dinner on his eightieth birthday, and they

were boasting of its incidents, while he smiled and deprecated but was happy.

All these years I have known of Rufus Barrett Stone's products. He has always a youth he is sending to college, or a young lawyer he is training in the law as a social career. He never was known to rebuke or exhort. He has a quiet, tolerant laugh that is the very music of understanding. His subjects make themselves. He gives them no advice, only help and a lift. He will never be rich, though he has high standing as a practicing attorney. He requires nothing of anyone; the others go their own way. I do not understand him and must not try to describe him. He is just an artist in personality. He has made men love their town. He is its orator on all great occasions, for what he says is the music of all men's aspiring. He has written local history in a new dress, clothing that commonplace theme in beautiful English that describes a sordid generation of money-making in decent garb of the beauty of his own spirit. He calls off the familiar names in the terms of the imagination common to himself and to them.

My third artist is Phil Lehmer, one of the dough-boys of the recent war. An engineer by training, he went to Wyoming to settle on lands assigned by Government, in those days of high agrarian hopes after the boys came home. Then officials in Washington dreamed of sending the soldier boys back to the land; now we know that the number who

can subsist upon the land is not unlimited. And the irrigated valley allotted to some hundreds of families in that semi-arid state has had a varied career; bounteous crops the first three years, then prices deflated and crops blighted, banks failing, savings lost, mortgages foreclosed, men greeting one another on the streets with grim smiles to exchange the one word "busted." Yet in this little town among the beet-fields most of the families have remained.

The reason is what Phil Lehmer did. Of course others helped; indeed, it would be possible to give the credit to his pastor, but I suppose true religion and loyal friends are seeds of artistry. There was a little church in the place and a stirring congregation. They needed a place for larger meetings. Phil offered to plan the building, though he was not then a member, telling how he had erected many of the sort for army encampments. His plan stirred imaginings, and it required only the executive push of the minister to set going a long and joyous period of building. They excavated for the basement with their own teams; even women drove the horses. They fashioned the curious rafters that characterize the lofty roof, fifty feet high, with a reminder at once of barn and of cathedral aisle. They toiled on the sheathing and shingling, until it was all erected. The whole valley was proud of the building's stout resistance to a terrific blizzard that left a desolation in many flimsy towns that

year. About three years passed before its broad floor was laid, in front of the amazing theatrical stage. I was there when the governor sat at the head of a table set for four hundred on that floor. Later I saw it thronged with spectators of an evening of basketball; and later still the whole community gathered there in the hush and thrill of an old-fashioned revival.

The artistic character of play in a working community is only appreciated by those who have read Hamlin Garland's bleak descriptions of the sordid toil of farming without it. It is the artist's touch, that makes weary hours and waiting years beautiful. There used to be gusto in farming, but in those days there was no money-bridle in the farmer's mouth. Now he is driven with a mortgage and whipped with wants. He cannot go now to barn-raising and get drunk, and be proud of it. He must waste no days, and no strength, in horse-racing. He may be removed from his land if he does not watch his step. He has learned the industrial warning, "Safety First," and applied it to his own case. For him there must be a kind of play suited to his ordered state, or none. Recreations must be systematic, as agriculture is industrialized. But the refreshment he gains from meetings with his neighbors of an evening, from playing the games and winning in the contests he reads about, or from acting in a play, or seeing a moving-picture, that dramatize the life about him,

is restful to mind and soul. This is what Phil Lehmer did. He held a mirror of laughter up to the youth of a town that must wait a generation for the fulfilment of hopes, and taught them to wait.

I met my next artist in Arkansas. He had been a schoolmaster—principal, in fact, of a city school. I do not know whether the oppression of the system confused him or not; but he was discontented, said he wanted to be of more use. Last summer I saw him away out in the open country dedicating, with his people about him, a curious building, which they call “the schoolhouse,” and he describes as their church. For J. M. Bandeen has become a minister. The front of his school-building—which is also church—is a beautiful auditorium, of neutral design, equally becoming to religion or to education or to any public assembly. Behind it and beneath are six rooms. Now, you do not know Mr. Bandeen’s artistry unless you realize that most of the rural people of Arkansas are averse to education, hostile to science. They have had state laws that forbid effective taxation for educational purposes; and they elect illiterate men upon school-boards, that they may neutralize even these laws. But they believe in religion; their religion is in the hair-trigger of their feelings. Mr. Bandeen has interpreted religion as faith in their children.

His art is expended happily in a small and fertile valley, where dwell two score families of superior

imagination. He has about thirteen acres now under his hands, about his school and his home; and I saw about five acres of strawberries in bearing, when I attended the dedication. So Mr. Bandeen is touching the land, that hitherto has borne grass for mules, corn for hogs and cows, with some of the red colors and some of the rare flavors of God's artistry. I look upon his work as like that of great painters who work on canvas, only he holds up to a community of prosperous farmers, and to the surrounding mountaineers, the faces of their children illuminated by the hopes of this awakened generation.

As I sat looking at his field of strawberries, between sessions, there came to talk with me a mountaineer in overalls, who told me of his migrations through five states—he was a squatter of the sort that formed the legislation of the fifties—and his talk drifted to his hopes, awakened for the first time in this community, that his children might find a permanent home and go to the head of the human class. In the services I found another to add to my list of beautiful old men, a face and head to satisfy Raphael set above a form tall and straight, and crowned with gray hair. Attentive, slowly smiling only in conversation, he awakened my inquiry, and I discovered that he is the pastor's chief elder and backer, a splendid type of the old country gentleman. I saw Mr. Bandeen's artistic reward in this attentive steady face, as the old man

listened to the addresses concerning the new community life in which the church serves the people of the whole community.

I do not know that I can describe the last and best of my artists. Indeed, description can never reproduce but only betoken the reality, especially of a living man. He was a farmer twenty-five years ago, one of the belated gentlemen of an older order who fattened cattle in the valleys east of the Hudson River, before that lucrative occupation was inherited by Iowa farms. He saw his lands and those of his neighbors depreciated, saw fat profits, touched with the sporting chances of the old days, succeeded by drudging toil at fixed and meager pay. He saw the beauty of the town he loved, and dreamed that it would become a place of residence for the people of the city. So he launched a dream of beauty that had been in his mind's eye. On lands of his own and of his neighbors he dammed up the waters of small streams and made an artificial lake. The children of the countryside have for twenty years, every summer day, trooped thither to learn to swim; boating and fishing engage their elders. Other amusements have made the place a center of enjoyment of the beauty of that storied countryside. George Durgy's dream was not long enjoyed by himself, for he scarcely saw the first of the years of enjoying it; but it remains as a glass in which even the speeding passerby sees how lovely is that Connecticut coun-

try. One sits of an evening by the shore of that fair level expanse, and sees the colors of the sky laid on the grounds beneath his eyes. He has a new sense of the beauty of trees, of the curve of the hills. It is easier to see them below the eyes than above. The little lake makes a picture of all—sky, grass, trees and the varied shades of light. George Durgy's art makes the man who has known that land for a generation see it in its beauty. It was the work of an artist.

People of this insight are few. Most American communities have none of them. Or if they are there, they have none to manage them, as Harry Bicksler used the genius of Phil Lehmer. I suppose the number must be greater than the number of opportunities, for one often meets persons who long for beauty that will comfort the tedium. There is a deal of aspiration expressed in individual performance. But the need of the present time is social performance, social art. The schools do not encourage, they even suppress it. Churches, that ought to be fertile in art-stimulus, frown upon beauty and play, though they are pondering a better way. There can be no direct stimulus, my observation would lead me to believe; but surely every public educator and minister ought to be on the watch to encourage and to reinforce the man or woman who would make life beautiful with imagination and faith. For church and school have the resources of society, in trust for that very purpose.

The hope for a greater number of such artistic adventures is found in our national wealth, and in its measure of distribution. For the one condition common to all these cases is the incoming of wealth, in some form, into the community. It is the testimony of many students of art, and of its service to mankind, that its always present condition is abundance of wealth in the community and in the population. With wealth come leisure, tolerance and freedom of expression.

IV

THEY STAND ALOOF

IN a New England town of five hundred people there is one store, with one church, one grange, two women's clubs, nine country schools which have one big school day each year, and a library, a play house, and a community hall. One-third of the families in the town support and attend every public event. They furnish the members of church and grange. They patronize the local store. They belong to the Community Club. They contribute to celebrations of the town's historic sites and persons. They lead in politics and manage the town-meeting.

One-third of the families are too poor to take part in anything. Many of them have other handicaps in the race of life which forbid their running in any of the events that display the town's progress. This double handicap accounts for two-thirds of the families.

But one-third of the families take part in nothing. The minister who wondered why his church had only a part of the people discovered that those who attended, and those who were members of his church, attended the play festival, sup-

ported the Grange, worked in the "bee" by which the foundations of the library were laid; in fact, he found that his church members were members of nearly everything else. He could account for the absence of the poor and defective families, but he could not find any reason for the lack of religion in one family in three, who just stayed at home—except that they stayed away from everything else.

These people stand aloof. They attend nothing. They contribute to nothing. They are members of nothing except of their own families. Some of them do not vote. They send their children to school; they are compelled by law to do so. But they express their attitude to life both here and hereafter by the same attitude of not participating. They stand aloof.

Reasons for this reserved position are fully expressed by country people. It is surprising that they practice so candidly what they preach. "The farmer is independent," they say. "You can always get a living on a farm." "We live in the country to be free to do as we please." Other people profess a philosophy of life and their acts often belie their words, but country people idealize freedom, and they practice it.

Perhaps it is not so simple as that. The experience may be first, and the declaration may be a reflection of experience. For men often bless themselves with words for doing what they must do and cannot do in any other way. They idealize

their own life. Naturally country people praise the lonely life, since it is their own way. I have often pondered the state of mind of my old friend John Elijah, who goes now on a cane, but goes most often to the barn and the poultry yard and back again to the house. He "never was one to go to things," they say. Not a recluse, either; a cheerful, friendly old man always. But one always had to go where he was to meet John Elijah. He did not go to church, nor to the fair, nor to horse races, nor to school-meetings. Sturdy opinions, never questioned, were his; slow to move, proud of his own, was his spirit. No welcome in his mind for change. His face showed little trace of the experience of joy, and small use of humor. I have often wondered what he thought about God. I suppose he had memories of great sermons heard in his youth and solid inclinations toward justice and truth, because of the fear and awe of the night and the day that regulated his life. The sky and the seasons, the stars and the mighty sun, I dare say, made him reverent. I do not know, for he was neighbor only when the raw elements of sickness, fire or death were in evidence. He had no social relations except with members of his family, among whom were his cows, his hens and the dog.

I recently called on old Jane; no, we do not call her old, but up to her eightieth year we have called her Jane. She was old, and she talked of her life-long convictions about immortality. Hers is a

lively mind; pointed and emphatic her speech all these years, and her voice is still the strong calling utterance of a farm woman who can converse with the men in the barn, or with the maid in the cellar, while she peels the potatoes. She has not been to church, I am sure, in half a century. It has long been difficult to get her to attend even a country feast on the next farm. Years ago she had set her mind in the groove of denial of life after death. She cheerfully recited her mother's calling of her an infidel when, as a girl, she avowed this conviction of the finality of death. She had not changed her place of abode since her marriage over sixty years ago, nor had she reopened her mind to convictions of immortality. Practical and matter-of-fact, she had lived a useful life, believing in homely, attainable virtues, and leaving the unknown to God. Just as she minded her own affairs and expected her neighbors to do the same, so she limited her faith to what she had to do, and stopped short of beliefs as to what God would do.

There was a blacksmith in a New York village who lived to be sixty, minding his forge, and attending all the funerals of three generations of his neighbors. Sam Green knew where every unmarked grave was in the cemetery, and was often called upon to lay off his leather apron and go with a visitor from afar to locate a spot in the graveyard where was buried the body of some older citizen, of a child, or a farmhand, whose relatives

now desired to mark his grave. Sam knew the names and the family connections of all the town-folk of the past. And yet he had ceased to go to church.

But Sam Green did not remain forever aloof. Happily there came to the town a minister who had the key to his temperament. He planned for the town a bank and a lighting system. He had a club for men, which no church had ever before offered the men of the town. That club got the blacksmith. And when he joined he was foremost in promoting plans for the bank and the lights upon the streets. It turned out that Sam Green had years before secured a right to the one water-power available for running the lighting-plant, and now he was pleased to turn it over to public use. Until he died he remained the leading member of the church club for men and, I am told, a regular member of the congregation.

I have not answered my own question: What makes them stand aloof? Indeed, I do not know. There is perhaps no one answer. Men are various, and the interests of the community have been one, or have been two, or even three—a church, a school, and a voting-place. Men are of many kinds; but our stern fathers tried to run them all into one mould, or perhaps permitted them so many as three choices. They joined none of these, but instead cherished alone their family life, which has an infinite variety of experiences, as many as the beasts

on the farm, as many as the children and grandchildren in the houses of the kinship.

The community must make possible many ways of good association. There must be many projects if we are to enlist many—by each enterprise, a few additional. The church ought to be associated with a variety of experiences. For religion is as various as life itself; and of all living things man offers the greatest variety. Many minds, as many faces, go to make up the community.

I suppose therefore that the parson who discovered that "One in three of the families of the town went to everything—supported everything," would have discovered, if he had examined more closely, that each community interest engages for itself a margin of the community that nothing else has reached. Each lodge has some joiner who goes to that lodge alone. Some come out for a church supper who do not frequent the parent-teacher gatherings. Most families willingly send their children to the schools. Every pastor knows that there are families desiring their children to go to Sunday School who will not themselves join the church. Voting has been supposed to be a universal function, though we are alarmed in these days by the fact that only about one-half the American electorate vote upon occasion. It takes all sorts of people to make up a world, they say: yes, it takes all sorts of enterprises to engage the kinds of people of a community.

The process in which the churches are most earnestly engaged seems to me to be one of winning these aloof persons and families to participation in worship and in community life. It began for America with the Great Revival in 1800. Before that religion was governed by three forms of control. These three forms of authority were government, kinship and doctrine. All of them have been lost to the Church. The pioneers went away from Virginia and Pennsylvania to escape them—along with other limitations. The great evangelists, McGready and McCurdy, and their many followers whose names, Cartwright, Asbury, Campbell, have become religious memorials, called all men by a new authority of persuasion. It proved more powerful than bailiffs or beadles. It struck men down to the ground with the force of religious feeling and conviction. Their aloofness had become terrible. The great meeting found them out and showed them their fears. For religion has a door into nearly every man's heart, if one can only find it.

The social movement in the churches in the past two decades is of the same sort. It continues the evangelism which Finney made intellectual and Moody expressed in terms of love. It is a call to the men and women of the community to hear the voice of God, in justice to the poor, in play for the tired, in health for the sick.

In my experience the women began it. They are

wiser than men. Willa Cather makes her professor say of his wife that he found her "less intelligent but more sensible" than other persons. That is the way with the Ladies' Aid Society. They want to "give a church supper." The old men of the church decry suppers. They say that suppers do not pay, and prove that the women bring the victuals and then their families pay for them, at half-price; which is true enough. They say much more. But they come to the supper, and meet there at the table a kind of man who has no taste for sermons, cannot see what there is to argue about in religion, and enjoys the food with ill concealed gusto. That is the word, gusto. Some like their religion as argument, and some like it as victuals. There is plenty of authority in Scripture for both of them. What meals the old Hebrews ate! What feasts out of the Old Testament our Lord attended and celebrated! Why, the very center of the Christian Church is a table set for eating and drinking.

I remember old Ben. It was never my sermons that got Ben to church, but the dinners the women gave, I am sure of it. I have the amused recollection of a sermon of mine in which, telling of making candles as a child, I used, seeking for the right word, the statement that "we made them, back on the farm, of lard"—instead of tallow! Ben was the first to see the verbal error, sitting in his pew with several other good housekeepers, male

and female; and their laughter silent and decorous enough, was so visible to the preacher that it nearly wrecked the sermon right there. But old Ben was a faithful member, as he had always been a steady man. I cannot imagine him being interested in a doctrine. It could not be cooked or put on a table.

Some men are attracted to a church by a building campaign. Will —— is a mountaineer who, if he had been brought up in an industrial town, would have been a foreman at least. He built away at his own house, so long as it interested him, but left off when he had a good roof and walls. He has never put on the siding, or had not when I last was in the valley. He is consumed with a desire to fashion things, to direct men. He found the quarry, when he decided to build the new school, contributed the stone, and directed the work of making the walls out of its rocky ledge. But as soon as the building was erected he wearied of managing it, and now he stands aloof again. What a pity there is not an eternal building to be done, that the Church might interest the born mechanic!

The business side of religion engages many a man. The merchant and the banker of every little town cannot easily keep out of the Church, just because it has funds to handle. I remember Jim, the young merchant in an Iowa hamlet who, as a matter of course, was wheel-horse of the little church there. I could not see that he was any more pious than men who stayed away. He was

drawn in because he had something to do there, and his type of man must administer.

There was Harry also, himself of modest attainments, who had been in the National Guard, who managed for years a club for boys, membership in which is now proudly recalled by church officers, once "his boys," who tell how their nightly drill made them men and Christians.

There is in the small community nowadays a type of man who is offended by the denominational church. He feels an impatient urge for unity. Wants people to get together. He enjoys only those occasions in which the whole town participates. The piety of a few, which appeals to the austere, offends him, because it seems small and trivial. I cannot describe his feelings, because I do not share them; but he longs for unanimous things, idealizes getting together. To him religion is a matter that concerns all mankind, just as to others it means a rebuke to the most of mankind. He is the mover, in many towns, for the community church.

Such a one is a professor in a western college. In education the public school is his ideal. In religion he is impatient of denominations, not for what they affirm, but because they leave so many out of account whom the schools serve. He talks of churches always in terms of the whole community, and labors endlessly to assemble congregations representative of all the families. He has plans for

using the " Kid-wagons " on Sundays to bring people to church. He declares that the church ought to meet in the auditorium of the consolidated school, as a means of grace. He would build a parsonage beside the teacherage, and train the community to use on Sundays for worship the same building as it is their custom to use of week days for teaching and learning.

It is in the spirit of seeking out the families that stand aloof that so many ministers have instigated the erection of community houses. They desire to meet all the people. They know that many whose hearts God has touched, whose lives are as orderly as those of church-members, are without response to the arguments of the preacher. So they strive to stir them with a new appeal, believing that the lack is not in the Spirit of God, but in the Church's limited understanding of life. They are not Protestants, neither are they liturgists. They are moved neither by argument nor by ceremony. In the drab and austere community life, founded upon commerce and politics, they find little to interest them. They want a lively and vivacious fellowship. God made them that way. The community house is their evangel.

The sociologist is said to divide men into four types—the forceful, the convivial, the austere, and the critical intellectual. The churches which fail of appeal to those who stand aloof usually contain austere persons. Sometimes they also include one

or two of the forceful. But they have small sympathy for the critical intellectual. And few of them are willing to make a place for the convivial. In fact, the good-fellows of the countryside are usually minded to leave the country in these days, so austere and industrious have farmers become, and go to live in the city.

It would be well for a church to test its policies by these four words, and to devise ways of winning members of all these major classifications of mankind. Let not the austere forbid. Their Lord was indeed stern as they are, but He liked well to dine, to eat and drink; and when He found their type attempting to control His associations He called a child to Him and set him in the midst and said memorable words about those whose only interest is play.

If one were to say how those who stand aloof may be won, let it be clearly understood that there is no one way. Man is infinitely various, and in every family are born samples of more types than those aforesaid sociologists ever heard of. We must by all means win some. Preach, yes, but do not rely upon preaching. Play, indeed, but do not take your community gatherings too sacredly. Argue and explain, by all means; but let not the doctrinal man select the church membership; for none knows better than he knows, if he is a true thinker, how little he knows of the free grace of God. Above all, give people something to do in

the community. Be not jealous of their membership in the church, which is only one way of testifying to the Unknown.

At least once in every year there ought to be a thorough and solemn revival of religion in every community. For the revival has mysterious appeal to the American heart. It should be held in the community house, managed by the banker, the ushers should be "men who have lived the life;" and the preaching should be doctrinal, tolerant, persuasive and austere. The purpose of the revival should be to shake the town to its foundations and to warn every soul of the danger of standing aloof from the united testimony to the compelling love of God.

V

THE SEXTON'S HOLY CALLING

WE stopped in an Ohio hamlet and entered the church. On the steps was a tall man unknown to us, a stranger, who greeted the others as one well known to them, and discussed the conference to be held that afternoon and evening. Later I learned that he was the janitor. A man about seventy, hard of hearing and short-sighted; he had a farm on his hands as well, and shortly excused himself to go milk his cows. There was something of distinction about him even then that has fixed him in my memory ever since.

But there was an earlier impression, or rather a sight that has remained among my memories of that day. The opening of the door of the little old church showed me the aisle and the pulpit and the line of the pews. Everything glistened with care. Dust was nowhere, and all the dark woods were shining as from the hand of one who knew how to make the impression of reverent tending. The two impressions—of “Old John” and of his polished, well-ordered church furniture—belong together. Later he came back, and stayed through the whole

gathering, an interested listener, but most solicitous over his two stoves. These were his pride and joy. He begged that no one in his absence should do anything to them, "unless," he confided to one of the older members, "you shet these drafts just a leetle."

It has been a weary hunt these many years for the sight of a good janitor of a country church. Such men are not common. Indeed, two causes make them to be scarce; and one is the fact that few country laborers believe in making the church better than their own home, so that it is difficult to get a good janitor if he is wanted. The second reason is that few congregations realize the importance of making the house dedicated to God a beautiful place.

There are many officers who will oppose the use of the church for socials or school-meetings; but few of these will pick up the litter of the previous Sunday before church and Sunday school assemble again; or will take the time to dust off the pews. They stoutly maintain that the house of God is too good for a farmers' institute, but are unwilling to make it clean from the dust that blows in from the farmer's fields.

It is no wonder that country people stay away from church—the young people and strangers, I mean—when the building is too often not heated until the congregation enters. Sometimes the windows are broken. Often the door stays open all

through the week, and at times it is regarded as right to keep the church-house "common." I had a friend, pastor of a thriving hamlet, who set out to keep his church locked during the week. The nearest congregation of another denomination started a revival one week, and without asking permission, just as a matter of course, decided to use the pews of his church. He being away, they entered a window, and when he returned he found himself under criticism for the incident. It created more of a scandal for the door to be locked against thoughtless neighbors than ever the neglect of the house of God had created during the previous years. By the ideals of these people religion must be made an earthy thing like the use of a barn. The house of God must be open for the tramp to enter and sleep, as well as for the casual preacher to enter and exhort in the interest of a division of the community.

I sometimes wonder whether such people as this have any godliness. Their religion is never above their own selves. They find it comfortable and easy to experience. For when one speaks on the ill condition of their house of worship, they say, or at least their preacher says—for such people never have a pastor: "Why, that is just the way the people live themselves." I have found it very difficult in such communities to extend the ideas of religion, since there is no welcome in their minds for anything better than themselves.

I contrast with this slovenliness of religion the state of the Dupage Church, the first time I came there to see Matthew Brown McNutt, the pastor. It impressed me as perfect in order and design on that Sunday morning, but very bare. The walls of the house of worship in particular were unadorned, and seemed to me plain. But as soon as the people began to come, many of them early, they laid away their outer wraps and went in to sit down in their accustomed places quietly. Then I saw that the liveliness I missed was given to the church interior by the people. When they were all present it seemed to be a beautiful place.

Coming from a Catholic church in Wisconsin, which had seemed to me excessively ornate yet engaging even to my austere Protestant eyes, I next Sunday visited a village church in Texas; and in the children's room in the basement I found the same effect—only adapted to a better intelligence. On all the walls, level with the eyes of small people, were orderly displays of pictures and cards. Not a square foot was bare and the whole was systematically displayed to catch childish eyes and accustom them to the symbols of Christian faith. No child or man could worship in the Catholic church, coming to it either out of the solid greens and browns of harvest or out of the solid white of winter, without receiving indelible impressions of that religion, its symbols, its saints and its sacraments. Neither could a Texas child sit for an hour,

in the room devoted to teaching little people like him, without inheriting memories of the Holy Land and of the Saviour's childhood that would stay with him unto the end. In both cases there was a janitor of the building who kept all these furnitures of the imagination in order, that they might seem to be reverently cherished, just as the impressions they conveyed should be reverently thought upon all through later years.

Wordsworth remarks in a poem of his later years that he could not so vividly enjoy the sight of daffodils as he could in youth; but he found his memory of them as he lay upon a couch of contemplation to be as fresh and vivid as the first impression. It is possible—indeed, in my observation it is probable—that some of the irreligion of our present generation of Americans is the result of the ungodliness of church buildings which “were no better than the houses of the people themselves.” When religion is clothed in terms of humanity, and slovenly humanity at that, grown-up men and women cannot in later years look up to God; they must needs look down to shabby and unbeautiful worship.

Therefore I have come with years to believe that the sexton or janitor of a country church has a task even more spiritual than that of the preacher. His testimony is heard all the days of the week—or, rather, is seen. For all religion is communicated through the senses. All its communication

ought, therefore, to be godly. By that I mean they should express something high and sacrificial. The church property should be maintained with scrupulous care. It should be always the best house seen upon the lands.

I talked with "old John" in the Ohio hamlet after he had returned to the church with his best clothes on. He had been unwilling to stay for the afternoon service because he "was not dressed." The same tribute which he prepared in dusting and warming the church, until there seemed to be worshipping when the first person came to open the door, he required of himself. His working clothes, suitable for sweeping and making fires, were good enough to milk his cows in, but not for sitting in the session after the first hymn. He must come dressed, as the church was dressed, for the presence of God and the people. He told me, in answer to my inquiries as to his habits of caring for the building, that he kept the lawn always cut, and that his most anxious care was to keep the walk in front clean of the droppings of the birds in the trees and upon the porch. He had a weary but a satisfied mind, for he attained the perfection I had noted. He did not seem to be impressed by my praise, as if he had a standard of his own to which he was more attentive. And, indeed, a good janitor will not get much praise of people who see no godliness in a building. He has to feel in himself the approval of a task performed for the God of all

Praise, or he will not attain godliness in the house of prayer.

I am well aware that it may be replied, the religion of buildings may go astray and come to nothing. Well do I remember a church in Illinois which had long been closed, as far as regular worship was concerned—though the countryside was full of people. Yet it was maintained in perfect order by the remaining members of the old families whose fathers built it. Their care never made them humane or evangelistic. So, indeed, the care of buildings may be fruitless. Yet what feature of religion, pray tell, cannot be so stultified? Preaching may become empty scholarly pride. The sacraments may degenerate into liturgy. Sunday schools may lose their teaching power. I plead for the sanctity of the building of worship and the spirituality of the office of janitor.

In an earlier time it might have been permissible to permit church buildings to be without care; but now, with standards of improvement on all sides, it is ungodly for a church building to be cared for no better than the homes of the people themselves. For it is obvious that what I am pleading for will be provided only by the better class of residents, those who have attained for themselves indoor plumbing and modern housing in many refinements of taste. Just as soon as their better houses arise the house of God becomes inferior, if it is not cared for in a better manner than that of the aver-

age dweller nearby. If there is godliness—that is, a sense of the greatness and goodness of God—in the neighborhood, it will assert itself in the demand for a better house for worship than the people have in most cases themselves.

I recall an instance of this fact in a New England town thirty years ago. There were three churches. The preceding generation had made money, and had laid the foundation of fortunes that were still the best in the place. They rebuilt the one house of worship whose congregation still survives. The two churches which did not at that time rebuild have died. One building has been closed for five years, having been used during the preceding five only for funerals; the other has been long closed, and has now been transformed into a place of public entertainment. The spirit of worship was impossible even for poor people in a house neglected and not harmonious to the new standards of living. The house of God's worship had to be in fact—although none of these people were liturgical—superior to even the houses of the better-fixed of the families of the town.

I would suggest, therefore, as rules of the care of a church, in order that it may survive, the following:

First, it should have an employed janitor, a man or woman who has a sense of the religious use of the house, who will make it and keep it suitable to the religious sense not only of the neighborhood,

but of all worshiping people everywhere, a suitable place of worship to Almighty God.

Second, the house should be kept heated long enough before the services of worship or assembly to be comfortable for the old, for the feeble or ill, so that they may sit without conscious inconvenience during a period of two or three hours at least.

Third, the house should be clean and in order at all times, in a degree harmonious with the taste and habit of the most exacting people of the world. The grounds should be simply parked, to convey the impression of care and affection, the shrubbery massed, grass cut and fences repaired. No local standard will do here. The religion of Christ is international and must show in its every expression the influence of the good taste of refined people of all countries.

It will appear from all this that the task of a church janitor is a divinely ordered one. He is to be chosen for his religious sense of duty, and for his recognition of the testimony to faith that can be rendered by wood and stone, by trees and lawns.

It is not inappropriate, therefore, that the minister himself should be the sexton. Indeed, he had better exercise his energies here than even upon his own premises. For if he has to choose he should prefer to make beautiful the place where God is said to dwell than to make comfortable that

in which his wife dwells. His labors will bear fruit; and if the church is to live the people will in time take from his hands the loving care of the church. But he had better have faith in his work with a broom and a mower than in his work with a pen or a typewriter—if he must choose. The one will be forgotten because it is of but a day, and he himself will go on after a time to be heard by other audiences; but the church building and premises will stay and preach long after he has passed, and after the details of his message are forgotten.

Many churches are dying; and some of them are no longer needed. We all believe in the larger parish, with a radius of automobile travel instead of horse-haulage. It is my contention that among the determining tests to be met by those churches fitted to survive, in the strain under which all will fall in the coming years, those will remain and serve the coming generation whose buildings have had loving and reverent care. For, after all, reasons for the survival of a church must be found, not alone in the spirituality of a soul, but in the spirituality of wood and stone, of a membership competent and godly. There is a godliness of wood and stone, as there is of the human body.

The highest religious tribute paid to the body of man was paid in the comparison: "Your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit." Is it not proper, then, to embody holiness and godliness in the house in which men assemble to worship God, as an ex-

pression of the presence in wood and stone of the sacrificial spirit which is our highest revelation of the character of God? Is it not right for me to believe, who have grieved over the shabbiness of many little country churches, and over the ungodliness of the present generation, that slovenly churches seen or attended in childhood leave the grown man indifferent to all claims of the gospel and devoid of any standards of godliness?

VI

THE HARD FACE OF NATURE

THERE is no disguising it, country life is hard, and country people are comparatively poor. But they like it. They would like to be rich; this they admit volubly. But in sections in which their neighbors are rich they do not say much about wanting money. They just stay in the country and relish the battle. I will admit that in the parts in which no one ever had much money, the appetite for it is ravenous. Go among mountain people and talk with the "boys," around the square where the mules are tied during Court Week, and you will hear many tales of smart fellows who grabbed a big lot of coin in a sharp bargain. Talk to the men sitting on boxes around a grocery-store stove at a remote hamlet in east Texas, and you will hear them wistfully relating the meteoric rise of one of their number who formerly picked cotton with them and now is a driller in the oil-fields "and drives his own car."

The book *Teef-Tallow* tells of this awe of money, among the poor of the mountains. The sharper is their ideal man. No tricks are too unscrupulous to be approved by them if by them a

man beats somebody out of money. No schemer is offensive if he conducts his "business" with swift and sudden profit as its goal attained. But these are crude folk, who have never seen much money or known what softness money brings with it. Many of them leave the country at the first coming of the railway. They go to work in the first garage, or away to Detroit, to get the big wages which their small skill and big brawn may earn on some days of a week. Many go into business in the towns, and learn the lesson of slow earning and long saving. They find at the end a discontented wife and silly daughters, who go down to see the train come in with their arms around each other's waists, chewing gum and furtively listening, as they saunter past, to the remarks of the men. Some come back to the country to live, but most of the lovers of softness and money go on to the city, if they can get there, to live in a hired house and to drive a cheap car, as the goal of life.

I remember in my parish a big barn built on the hill by a broker. He had been a farmer's son and had married a farmer's daughter. They lived high, for he had "made and lost millions" in his day. In the barn which he built shortly before the Street crushed him were dumped many hundreds of his cancelled checks. Farmhands had come for years to the loft of that barn to look over these checks, signed with his name, which bore fabulous figures. "Ten thousand dollars, Jim!" cried one. "Yes,

but here is one for fifty thousand. Gee! ” To these country boys this pile of fabulous checks meant more than the broker’s sporty equipage—far more than his trips to Egypt and the tall French clock by his staircase. To them the whole dizzy career of his life was pictured in those cancelled checks for thousands.

There is little money in farming. Less still is there in lumbering, for those who wield the axe, and on whose land grew the trees. But another fascination than that of money-making is to be found on the farm. It is the pride of hard knocks, the fierce joy of battling a storm, the perils gladly endured in saving a herd of cattle caught in a blizzard.

I saw this joy one stormy day when Howard and Carl stopped at the farmhouse to get water for their radiator. They feared they would not get through with their car. They must face the north wind for four miles up Great Hollow, over a glassy road now filling at places with drifts. I offered to go along, and they welcomed my company, “for we may need your help to get through.” In the car I found Mattie, Howard’s wife, and there was a great box of Carl’s groceries, newly bought to keep him during his lonely watch in an empty farmhouse through the winter.

For two hours we battled with the wind and snow, going a distance which in fair weather occupies about twenty minutes at most. It was keen

hardship. Cold beyond human endurance for long. Wind strong enough to force the car to a standstill. Broken chains repeatedly mended. Car in the ditch to be patiently backed and lifted out. Not a complaint. No grumbling and no oaths, as those two countrymen worked up the steep hills against every possible strain, out of impossible accidents, to the house they sought. At last, as Carl drove into his barn, he said: "There, I have food and I have wood, and what do I care for winter!"

That day I realized the reason why people live in the country. It offers every year the dire face of danger. It gives no promise on the day of sunshine that tomorrow, in storm or peril, will not try the body and soul to the utmost.

Cattle are wild creatures, tamed to a degree; but to conquer them and rule them requires readiness for their moods of wanton outbreak. Who can tell when horses will run away? And there is a code that requires the man to keep the reins even if he be thrown and dragged, it may be, to his death. Bulls are the demons of wild nature. Tamed from calf-days, and led by the ring in his nose from stall to his picket in the pasture, the bull, as every farmer knows, grows sullen with years. The hour will come, if he is not sent in time to be slaughtered, when the fury of his wild resentment will turn upon his master, or upon the casual bystander, and he will gore a man to death.

Nathaniel is a dairyman who inherits the wisdom of a century in managing cattle, but one morning, at dawn, King, his great Holstein bull, stood at the door of his stall, his broken chain dangling from his nose, waiting. What happened in that barnyard Nathaniel cannot remember, after the first step of his advance upon King with the gaff in his hand and a stern command upon his lips. He found himself beyond a log on the other side of the farmyard near the stone fence, and the great creature roaring and growling beyond the barrier, rushing to right and left to find a way to get round to him and trample him to death. And at that moment the two farmhands, newly risen, came into the yard and saved him. But do you suppose that Nathaniel gave up dairying? He still "makes milk" for a living, though there is another Holstein bull in King's stall—a younger animal.

It is the hardship of life itself that rewards the countryman in lieu of rewards of farming, or lumbering, or fishing. It is "the bright face of danger." The relentless drive of the gray storm puts will into families who live apart. Then, the cattle must be housed; those out on the range or in pastures must be fed. The children must be taken to school, if it is possible. The roads will have to be shoveled out, that the mail may come through, as soon as there are enough men to do it; and every man must cut through the drifts by his own fences. There is no languor in these storm

days; none but old men sit at home. For these heroic days all are virtuous; and none who live in neighborhood esteem as worthy men shrink from the cruel, glad labor of fighting the storm in the interest of the community.

William James, the Harvard psychologist, praised hardship, and called for "a modern substitute for war." Many who, like Professor James, are city-bred are finding in the life of the country their own "substitutes for war." They go motor-ing with all the family in the car, and all their housing on the running-board. They camp out under the stars. They peer into country lanes and hike up mountain trails, seeking hardness. Of course many of them, or their wives, or daughters—especially their daughters—cannot stand hardship when they encounter it. Most of them go back to plumbing and to their salary, to the store, or the "swivel chair." But some do not so return.

One of these has built himself a house upon a hill—the valley would not do; the hill for his. So up a tortuous road he has driven his car daily for three years, and up he has ordered his teams while the glorious period of building is going on; the very difficulty of the climb is a greater cause of pride to him than the house at the top. Not until the house was completed did he attempt a road on a better grade. Such men are true countrymen. The cities are full of them. They long for a life of hardships to be conquered. The automobile is their magic

carpet; the country life, their fabled land of genii to be outwitted, of tyrants to be overcome.

In the Home Mission Boards we find many applicants for the hard, lonely places. A few years ago one of these agencies advertised for a physician to go to the northernmost post, under the Arctic, to which supplies go only once a year, if so often; and there were forty prompt applicants, each eager to go. "But," said the secretary, ruefully, "scarcely any of them had any religious qualifications." Women, when single, are especially prone to seek and to hold these lonely places where danger lurks.

Miss Jennie Moore is a veteran woman worker who has spent over twenty years at Rocky Fork, Tennessee, by Devils Fork in the Southern Appalachians. I met her ten years ago when she was limping upon two canes, and she told me her story. Starting out on muleback the previous summer, she was to conduct a score of mountain children by rail to an Exposition. Her mule shied at a hog which rushed out from behind a bush—and when she came to consciousness she was lying below the road; one foot unnaturally turned up, its sole to her face; one knee broken. She turned her broken foot round with her hands, crawled to the trail, caught her mule, tied on the saddle again, with a handkerchief to replace the broken girth, mounted somehow, and rode ten miles. She refused aid until she had taken her children to the Exposition—then she went to the hospital. Later all that

hospital's surgical work had to be broken, and reset by better physicians in a great city. And Miss Moore went back to her post—where she is now.

It is the physical hardships of the country that men prefer, it would seem, for in this day the city and the factory town protect men from the attack of life upon their bodies. The strain of complicated life is, rather, upon the finer senses, and upon the mind. The city is all noise to assail the ears, all glare to weary the eyes, and worry to wear down the mind. From these the man is free; instead, he has the country hardships of cold and heat, of strained muscles and accidents which dare one to devise the extreme remedy.

I used to admire, as a boy, the teamsters who drove the big horses into the woods in the oil-fields. One man alone in a forest has often to find or cut a roadway out to the highroad, with a load of no less than a ton. He asks no help. He mends the harness when it breaks. He pries a wheel out of a sink-hole. He maneuvers his team down a gully and up a slope, with only his own judgment to advise him. Such men are silently proud of their prowess. They solicit no praise of their exploit, and rather resent than welcome the admiration of softer people. The reason is that the hardship is its own reward. To battle nature, which is no gentle mother but a wild wolf-dam, gives a fierce satisfaction.

This is the reason why so many country people

“hate a tree,” and express their masterful aversion to beasts, and snow, to rain, and rocks. These are the physical obstacles in overcoming which life attains its ends. These natural creatures are the private soldiers of spiritual life, and man is the regular-army officer to keep them in their place.

I sat for a long day in a day-coach crossing the desert of Nevada. As I wrote and read a quiet voice talked on behind me, a voice so modulated that one could but hear almost every word. Two working men were telling one another their experiences since last they met. He of the quiet voice was a cowboy, a laborer on ranches, a hand on road-contracts, a “straw-boss” on tunnel-gangs. Gradually his story absorbed my attention. I laid aside my book and pencil to listen. Only after some hours did I find occasion to turn and look, and I beheld a handsome youth of less than thirty, clad in the ornate vest and red plaid of the plainsman. His talk was of long rides in the winter, of hard work in the shaft, of handling dynamite for the blast. It was a tale of danger faced daily with cool eyes, and of the saving of beasts, the shrewd care of his own life. It had its own rewards in freedom. He liked work for its own sake; he valued money but could not keep it. His last remark, as he got off at the station Lovelocks—romantic name of a prosaic desert cluster of houses—was a statement of his philosophy of human association; “It is a little place, but big enough—

only about fifteen hundred. I like 'em small. I can't stand a city."

The reasons why country churches are losing ground are these. The first reason is: The village and its people. Villagers want to be soft, and they crave to be rich. But they are poor. Country people despise softness. And as the churches are crowded into villages and the ministers there are more numerous than the churches, the farmers in many sections do not take village religion seriously.

The second reason is found in the state of mind of the woman. They "want to press a button and turn on a light, to turn a tap and have hot water." Why marriage makes a woman soft and changes her into a "gimme-girl," demanding money to spend, I do not explain. Indeed, who can explain anything? The wives of ministers prefer to live in towns, "with sewerage and lights." So the religion of hardness and poverty has no voice, no spokesman, among the people who prefer to live hard and to be poor and free.

I like best in my pastor his robust joy in the hard knocks of the country. He heads the gang of men who appear in overalls to get in a sick neighbor's crop. He toils all day, singing and joking, in the excavation for the new town library. He is always on call, when a farm hand has failed to arrive, to complete a gang at the saw before a neighbor's woodpile. His heart is in the right

place, for he loves what country people love, the hard physical battle against poverty, storm and dirt, which is itself the best reward of living in the open country. He asks no better material to work on than the Creator chose, who made man out of the dust of the ground.

VII

WILL THE FARM SURVIVE?

ONE cause of the unstable condition of country life in America is the domestic character of agricultural industry. Farming is a household occupation; all the members of the family take part in it, in a coöperation which is now unique in the field of production. The father, mother and children are essential to this industry. If a man has not a wife and has a farm, he must get a wife. A husband and wife having a farm feel the need of children. Happy is the farmer who has strong sons to bear part of the load, and to lift it from his shoulders as he grows older. Agriculture is shaped by characteristics of the housheold; it is hereditary, attaining its best when it is practiced in the third generation of farmers in the same house, and it is so domestic that the student of standards of living cannot disentangle the industrial processes from the home processes. No one can say finally, as to some things that go on about a house, whether they are to be labeled as production or consumption. The woman on the farm shares her husband's work, and the man coöperates with his wife. The children never know

when they begin to do chores. The day's work has no beginning and no end. The family circumstances and experiences are intertwined with the care of domestic animals, plants and soil.

Agriculture has passed in America through five stages of development, but it is still a domestic industry. It was manorial at the settlement of Massachusetts and Maryland; it took a pioneering form on the frontier as the people moved outward from these settlements; it developed into a self-sufficing household where all the necessary arts were practiced; it underwent a drastic speculative period; it has absorbed modern science, and is beginning to learn the mystery of coöperation. But through all these changes agriculture has remained a domestic industry.

There is an opinion prevalent among men accustomed to the processes of modern industry, that the farm is passing. It is a household industry, as weaving was in Scotland two generations ago, and as spinning was in America three generations ago. The other household industries have been transformed; why should farming persist in the hands of the household group? Hats were made on the domestic premises, now hats are made in a city in great factories. Shoes used to be made for the individual by a shoemaker who measured individual feet and made the shoes to fit the wearer. Now shoes are made in factories so vast that they come by blocks, so intricate that no worker performs

more than one process on a machine, and so heavily capitalized that the machinery is the property not of the employer but of corporations organized for the purpose of possessing machinery and hiring it out. Why should agriculture be retained in the hands of the head of a house, rather than possessed and directed by a joint-stock corporation, as shoe-making?

The power that is reconstructing one industry after another is sometimes called Big Business. It is characterized by the substitution of machinery for hand work, the employment of wage earners at processes ever more minute and specialized, the direction of machines and workers by a limited force of engineers, superintendents, and foremen, and especially by the organization of capital in ever greater combinations, in joint-stock corporations, as a method of ownership. It is Big Business that has within a generation reorganized the lumber industry, taking out of the hands of the small land-owner the production of housing materials. It is Big Business that mines coal, runs railways, owns chain-stores, and makes structural steel out of red iron ore. Big Business manufactures automobiles. In the case of the corporation which has many owners because its stock is for sale on the Stock Exchange, and as truly in the case of the famous automobiles whose vast factories are owned by one man, his son and his wife, there is Big Business—the form of ownership in

each instance is that of the limited liability company.

The farm is a family industry. It is Little Business. The head of the house owns it. Renter or owner, his is an unlimited liability. He has difficulty getting sufficient capital to stock his land with cattle, to buy machinery, and to erect suitable buildings. The capitalist, also, finds it difficult to invest in agriculture, with assurance of interest return. There is something about the farm that makes it impervious to the penetrating power of capital. It has not yet been made a Big Business; or if it has, in places, been attempted on a great scale, its big estates have as a rule been broken down, in the course of years, into small farms.

In the United States we have seen many attempts to farm the land and to organize the husbandry of cattle upon a great scale. There are some of these estates, such as the Funk farms of central Illinois and the Wadsworth family properties in western New York, which survive the changes that are effected by purely economic process. The Chaffee Ranch of North Dakota and the Rankin Farm of Missouri were notable instances of farms exceeding twenty-five thousand acres; each of them organized after a system, but each has yielded, after the passing of an early owner, to the pressure that breaks up land into small farms. The great cattle ranches of the West were unable

to hold together against the homesteader. The King farm in Texas, on which one rode for hours from the gateway to the house, is said at this time to be breaking up into smaller pieces. The plantations of the South have suffered the same disintegration.

There is a general tendency of the great and managerial estates to be succeeded by the smaller farms. The pioneer clearing succeeded the manor. The homestead succeeded the ranch. The farm follows the plantation. In sections about the cities the farm itself is broken up into little parcels, on which a house arises for those who seek "three acres and liberty." But in all processes of change the farm grows smaller. It is even more closely associated with the family. Instead of becoming an expression of capital, it has during the industrial revolution become ever more domestic.

The average size of the farm has decreased for a century. In 1900 the average acreage was 147; in 1910 it was 138. The ability of the farm to exclude capital, and to escape the domination of Big Business, is evidenced by the difficulties of pioneering farm operations in the years prior to the passage in 1914 of the Federal Farm Loan Act. Interest rates were very high, averaging eight and one-half per cent, but, in many sections of the West and South, reaching the height of twenty-five per cent. Owners of land, which ought to be the best security for loans, were unable to secure loans

on favorable terms, and the best available statistics at that time showed that not over one-half the farms were mortgaged. Even under the administration of the farm loan banks the proportion of farms mortgaged in 1925 was far below their capacity to borrow. The intermediate farm loan banks, devised in 1924 to assist farmers through the coöperatives in marketing their products, had reached, by 1927, only one-fourth of their capacity.

Moreover, the efforts of men of large means to invest in farm lands, usually about big cities, have not generally been rewarded with a profit. Near New York are many such enterprises, adequately capitalized and ably managed; but they do not pay. One dairy farm owned for a quarter of a century by a New York business man, and managed as a business with every attention to the possibility of profit, had attained at the end of that time only to the payment of five per cent upon the investment. Yet all about it are farmers who make an interest upon investment, and a living besides.

The reason why capitalized farms do not pay is discovered in a two-fold character of one factor. Management is the very essence of farming. Good management of a farm, capitalized and employing hired help, is hard to find. It requires a rare ability to make one hundred or twenty, or even two, farm-hands productive in the processes of husbandry. And the second aspect of farm management on a large scale is that it is costly, too costly

for profit. When the manager has been paid there is nothing left for the investor. The small farmer is compelled by his interest to be a manager; but the farm-hand on a big estate has not sufficient interest to insure the success of his processes.

For those reasons, and others akin to those, the man who would succeed as a manager of a capitalized farm prefers to own or to rent a farm of his own. "I have had many students who intended to be managers," said a Cornell professor, "and many of them have gone from the College of Agriculture into the employ of big estates; but for some reason they nearly all are found after a few years on farms of their own." That precious ability to manage is highly satisfying to its owner, on his own enterprise, and is reasonably profitable; but a motive of ownership is essential to its perfection, which cannot operate in the interest of a company whose owners are far away, unknown. The driving force in agriculture is the present owner, looking to his cattle and overseeing, with an interested eye, the processes of tillage of the soil.

The question of whether agriculture will be subjugated by Big Business is best answered by contrasting the processes of agriculture with business. The former deals with soil, domesticated animals and plants; the latter deals with machines. Soil does not wear out under husbandry. Domestic animals and plants increase their productions and give an ever better quality. But machines wear

out and are junked. Business is reducible to standardized processes which can be performed by hands. The machine does its work with ever less intelligent care from the hands. Agriculture requires more intelligent care. As science is applied to both, the one requires less intelligence in the workers, the other requires more intelligence in the workers. For the ultimate contrast between agriculture and business is that mass production is by machines, farm production is by living creatures. The machine, as science refines it, becomes so competent that "any fool can run it." The domestic animal or plant, as science is applied to agriculture, becomes ever more profitable, but also becomes so delicately bred that only an owner can be trusted profitably to care for it. So that science in a factory removes the tools of production farther away from ownership by the workers; science on a farm brings the tools of production ever nearer to the ownership of the workers.

Big Business tends even more to production by use of machinery, the wage to the worker, the dividend to the owner, the laboratory and the office for the management, the bank for capital, joint-stock and limited liability as the form of ownership; advertising as the way of attack upon the public. Agriculture, on the other hand, cultivates the soil as an indestructible asset, using domestic animals and plants which require the attention of their owner; the household group are the managers

and at the same time the laborers; the community is the corporation; the college is the intellectual center, and the coöperative is the collective organization for quantity production.

Another form of this contrast is seen in the fact that agriculture is essentially creative, while business is at its best a transformation of values; at its worst it is a mere exploitation or destruction of values. Much of modern business is little more than consumption, but the whole process of agriculture is productive. Lumbering has in the last generation been capitalized, so that it no longer belongs to the landowner but belongs to the corporation; but the lumbering done by a big corporation is little more than destruction. Few companies reforest the land. Like the mining corporations, they exploit but do not replenish the forests. So the great businesses of the country are mostly concerned with mining the raw wealth of a new country with standardized processes which destroy all but the best grades of materials. Agriculture, on the other hand, having as its motive home-making, is productive and constructive by its very process.

The more there is of agriculture the richer the country will be. Nature alone creates the values man most requires. Farming coöperates with nature and intensifies her processes. Business exploits the products of nature accumulated often through centuries and millenniums. When the coal business and the oil business are done, there will

be no more coal and no more petroleum. But when the alfalfa and dairy business has been carried on for a thousand years, the world will be richer and fairer than it was at the seventh day of creation. Every apple, every potato, every glass of milk is produced by intensifying the processes of creation; every hod of coal, every automobile, every chair made in America is a product of destruction, which leaves the world, by so much, exploited and made barren.

It is true that farm-values, time-values, place-values and use-values are paid for by mankind at high prices; but they are the prices of use and consumption. Farm values are creative, and essentially productive.

These creative processes go on in nature, but not rapidly enough to satisfy the wants of mankind without domestication. Industry destroys the forest, and cannot afford to replace it. Forestry does not invite industrial investment, because "money has to be turned over too fast" for its slow process. Domestication is possible only for the private owner. There is an exception in the case of forestry, which seems to be a process for municipalities. It is the foot of the farmer that fertilizes the land.

The possibilities of scientific agriculture in the hands of intelligent owners are beyond the probable growth of the population of the country. Already we are producing a surplus of agricultural products

beyond the needs of our people. Probably the peoples of the world can be fed and clothed out of the products of the soils of those peoples to whom the teaching of modern science is coming. And this possibility is predicated upon the expectation that the tillers of the soil will be farmers, not corporations. For the service of agriculture works through domestication of plants and beasts. The husbandman of these creatures must be their owner. They cannot be stimulated to produce that excess upon which cities are fed, and industries supplied, except by owners.

There is one remote contingency which may abolish agriculture. It is not business that can do it, but chemistry. If chemists could discover substitutes for food, for cotton, and for wool, then farming would be delivered into the hands of Big Business. *If!* Yes, that is a contingency. But before a substitute distilled in a laboratory, out of dust and atmosphere, can displace the potato and the grain of wheat, there must be a miracle of business, too, to make the substitute available and acceptable to the masses of men. If that time ever comes, then the green fields will go back to fallow, the orchard will become a forest, and the wild cattle will run in the desert again. And all men will live in cities. That will be the greatest revolution in morals and in religion the world has ever contemplated. But there is not any likelihood of its ever coming to pass.

I believe that the family farm will survive as a domestic industry. This belief cannot be proven, because it is of the future, and no man knows what the future has for those who follow. I believe it because of the dependence of man upon domestic animals and plants which require personal care; but for another reason. The soul of man needs the spiritual intercourse with nature which the farm assures. There he dwells in the midst of the influence of God's creation. The farm is the perfect school of personal character in which the poorest of men may learn. While, therefore, so many human beings are poor, for whom the farm-home furnishes food and shelter, we may believe that the farm as an industrial form will persist. Capitalistic organization might possess itself of much of the best lands in the river valleys of the world, but the time is not in sight even of the most agile imagination when all the countrymen shall be gathered into cities. At present of the billion and a half people on earth, at least a billion and a quarter are dwelling upon the land and tilling it, herding cattle and tending their crops.

VIII

THE RETURN OF THE DOMINIE

TWENTY years ago the opinion was commonly expressed that the country minister should practice agriculture on a farm and support himself. Now he is expected to be the shepherd of everything and every creature on an area of land. The former opinion was a reflection upon former times. It was an economic remedy proposed in despair, caused by the inadequate salaries paid. It was perhaps a criticism of the sermons preached in country churches by absentee ministers who lived in towns. The acute discussion of the country church during the past eighteen years, however, has produced a new conception of the rural pastorate.

Young ministers desire a community all their own. They say they look for service in a community church. This term may have a variety of meanings. Sometimes it expresses an antagonism to all denominations. Always it expresses impatience with religious discussions. More often it is a longing for freedom to serve, for unchallenged usefulness and leadership. Whatever elements it contains, however, there is always an idea of a

land-area at the bottom of it. And after years of experience, Malcolm Dana has given definition to the term, "The Larger Parish," by saying that "its minister serves all the people who live on an area of land." Harlow S. Mills was the first to use the term, "the Larger Parish"—at Benzonia, Michigan, in 1914.

The experience of such ministers discovers the surprising fact that they not only serve the people, but are called upon to evangelize the social customs, the play, the education, the agriculture, and the art of the community. They learn to serve the domestic animals and plants, sometimes to teach in the schools, and always to champion education. And their greatest surprise is in finding themselves the umpires in all disputes as to the recreations of the young. The religion of country people is practical. All serious spiritual matters are parts of the religious experience; and the church, when it has a resident pastor instead of an absentee "preacher," becomes either the center of agitation for better roads and adequate schools, or a center of ambitions to "go to the city" and to "go to college." In any case, the new country church is a plow or a stick of dynamite. It breaks up the ground. For the one characteristic condition of the country is land.

My friend, Dr. E. H. Sutherland, of Madison, Tennessee, strove for ineffective years to persuade his denomination to launch a better system of prac-

tical education; then he bought six hundred acres of old land, and began to till it, to teach, to call students about him, and to draw support from that land. Now he has a strong community of about a hundred souls, a school, a sanitarium, a community, all sustained upon that six hundred acres. No one has a salary. No one pays tuition. Everyone works. They were all living, when I last visited them, six miles from Nashville in a world apart. Not many pastors will have his complete experience.

Probably the next strongest community in America, for religious perfection, is Buckhorn, Kentucky. Here Harvey Murdoch has in a quarter-century erected, with the generous support of old friends in Brooklyn, New York, a community that worships God in play, health, education and evangelism. Everything is brought into subjection to Jesus Christ. Every year a hundred persons confess their faith in the Saviour. Every week some great athletic event is the talk of Buckhorn. The games are played in the center of the circle of buildings—college, infirmary, orphanage, and church, far away there in the wooded mountains. And every day the school-bell rings to call the children to classes, “from the A B C to the A.B. degree.” Every night the prayer-bell rings for two minutes, while every head is bowed in prayer.

But Buckhorn and Madison are out of the world. Let us take an example more normal and usual. In

Warren County, New York, is the city of Glens Falls, rich and thriving, in the midst of a farming population who toil for a parsimonious living upon depleted soils. One of the churches of the city has sent its assistant minister, Edmund W. Twichell, into the country, five miles north and six miles west, to serve all the people who live on the segment between those lines. Mr. Twichell has become the minister of every soul in that area, and pastor of four churches, only one of which is of his own faith. One is Quaker, one Methodist, one is a Memorial chapel; one is Presbyterian. When I last visited him, he had just been asked to widen his parish and take in a Baptist church. His program is simple. He does all that is needed—keeps up the properties, tends the graveyards, cares for the members, visits all homes, and holds a service in each place of worship every Sunday.

It works. The whole area is his. He is their "Dominie," for he serves them all. I suppose that no finer example is to be found in America of a city paying its religious debt to the people on the land. For Mr. Twichell and his senior pastor, Dr. John Lyon Caughey, consider that they are repaying by spiritual leadership what their church has received from the county, in personnel and in wealth. Happy service it seems to one who travels those country roads with the Dominie.

There is a Dominie in Maine, at Ashland, who with two assistants covers a parish of two hundred

and fifty square miles, for all of which they provide the only responsible Protestant ministers. In his work homely recreations and many lively gatherings with bright speeches, singing and games, occupy a large place. That great county is a land of scattered people, and these three ministers assemble their people at sixteen places. The great crop of this county is potatoes, and the work of the larger parish concerns itself with the potatoes as well as the men—it is a labor on behalf of the land.

The Congregationalists have another splendid woman in New England, Miss Hilda Ives, who carries on a church among the hills. She has the advantage of being a woman. She is “not trained to think that certain things are ministerial, but is ready to do anything that appears to be needed for the welfare of the people about her.” That states the support of the pastor on the land. The old-fashioned preacher used to avoid most things; the modern pastor in the country includes most things—excepting politics and business, which need as a rule no attention from him, and might resent his interference.

The country pastor who succeeds nowadays avoids nothing, but welcomes the opportunity to evangelize every man, woman and child, every beast and every acre with all that is upon it. Country people are industrialized and strained to give an account of themselves in their stewardship of land. The man of God who convinces them and

moves their faith is the man who bears their burden and prays their prayer in all the crises they must daily meet. He is the practical sympathizer, and has a universal appetite for experience; he has a gusto for common things, a zeal for making things, a practical belief that things can be made and done, an eye open for the presence of God in every event. He must be a preacher, but far more than the words he says must be his deeds of faith, in handling the things that have no ears to hear.

The greatest recent adventure in rural religion that I have known is that of Harry Bicksler, at Lingle, Wyoming. Other men have built slowly, but he has fought his way through in five years to a service of the whole community in all the aspects of life. This is a perilous thing to do, but the people of Lingle, and of the Goshen Hole in Wyoming where Lingle stands in the midst of an irrigated valley, have accepted his leadership. This year his church doubled its membership in eight months, fully one hundred confessing their faith in Christ.

Along with this spiritual movement has gone an abundant use of the big community house erected by the church. It is under the care of a community board, on which sits a representative of each society in Lingle; even the delegates of the lodges and of the American Legion sit with the representatives of church boards and societies. The community house is for recreation, for public meetings, for the

teaching of pottery and weaving, for religious education, for basketball, for public games, home talent plays and agricultural shows. It is thronged every week. The Church has opened her arms at Lingle and said to the community: "Come in."

It has laid a heavy burden upon the minister. But the administration of the community house by the community board has enlisted many wise and devoted men. The best of it is that as the community house is thronged on the nights of the week, the church is filled at services of worship, at meetings for prayer and religious education. Here the minister of a little village church in a closely peopled farm area is as absorbed and as busy as the pastor in a city, with the same multitude and the many varieties of problems that throng the city church. The power of the gospel is intensified by the number of kinds of problems which the church is called on to solve.

This is the first principle, then, of the modern country church, that it ministers to all who dwell on the land. The land thus served must be measured. The modern country church maps and defines its parish, but to everything within these bounds the pastor is the shepherd, and the people are the flock. So far as the church is concerned, its members are bearing the burden, and all who live in the area are sharing in the work. Naturally such a church receives many kinds of contributions. It is a practice of pure democracy in relig-

ion, yet no other church gives the minister so great responsibility or trusts him with such autocratic powers. I have observed the pastors of these communities, and I am amazed at the dictatorship which they exercise in the vast area of details. They are the leaders and the princes of their people. Yet like true parish ministers they learn humility, diplomacy. For the work they really accomplish is done by indirection. What they dictate and command is material and perishing; what they accomplish by persuasion is the final gain.

If one were to look to the future, it would be that some day rural America will be mapped anew for church work, and in every "trade-basin," where commerce and industry center around a bank and a store, there will be placed a pastor who will serve without discrimination all who live in an area. His presence will not exclude other ministry, but he will patiently establish his relations with all who live on that land. He will give no preference to his own members, but will lay upon them the burden he shares himself. He will constrain no one and will condition his service in no degree by membership, but he will include all in the care of the gospel.

He will be a great evangelist. For rural religion has suffered from too exclusive a reliance upon preaching and too little living contact; too few of the experiences of life have been included, and too many have been shut out of the Church.

When the minister serves all of the people, and lets them respond as they will, then they will come of their own mind and knock at the door of his church, and ask to bear their part of the burden of serving the whole community. This is not a dream, but it is a fact in the growing list of community churches in America.

IX

NATIONAL ADMINISTRATION FOR THE COUNTRY CHURCH

THE administration of spiritual experience is always repugnant to our feelings. Yet it is possible and even essential. A wife is often the skilful manager of the affections of her household. The person who sees that birthdays and anniversaries are welcomed, and that gifts are given and received, is the elementary administrator of love. We are even grateful to the loved one who tells us what he desires as a gift at a time when gifts are to be given. In religious matters Americans have learned anew in this century that there are quantities of human faith we can measure and values of men and of gifts we can manage.

Religious administration has, however, been casual and expedient. Bishops emerged and imitated the dignities and powers of the state, early in Christian history. The high officers of religion have always encountered opposition. They are accused of oppression and of selfishness, like that of kings. Such was the antagonism to the administration of the Interchurch World Movement in 1919-20 that

it vanished before aversion and distrust had turned to greater opposition.

Yet there is in modern life a type of administration largely automatic, because it is functional. It suits the modern mind, because it seems to be consistent with democracy. It is supposed to be based upon fixed values of things and upon scientific delegation of functions to those who act not upon their own whim but upon the logical performance of offices. In the greater churches there is today a slow transition to the functional form of administration, and away from the autocratic.

The real functions in religion may be said to be four—those of pastor, teacher, supervisor and national administrator. The first two need no definition here. The supervisor is an officer of religion whose duties are spiritual, personal and intimate. He has the oversight of ministers of religion, of religious workers and of the service they render. He has, or should have, no power. In religion, by its very nature, power and authority should not be personal, but should be exercised by the people themselves meeting in solemn assembly. Supervision is to be extended to every congregation by wise and kindly older religious workers, who go from town to town, to correct by their knowledge of the whole experience the troubles and disproportions of the local experience.

The supervisor should be "servant of the servants of the Lord," as one of the greater popes

finely stated his office. Indeed, supervision has been the finest office of the bishops of Christendom. It is one of the best signs of Protestant growth that increasing numbers of supervisors, commonly called superintendents, or sometimes presiding elders, are appointed in recent years to care for and visit the country churches, even of the most independent denominations. In obedience to the same need, the common schools are appointing "local superintendents" or, as a better phrasing has it, "helping teachers," to oversee, but without authority, the many small schools that are near to the homes of the people. But supervision is mentioned here only for purposes of definition; this chapter has to do with national administration.

The American denominations have been singularly fortunate in the men called to be "secretaries." These are our national administrators. They have experimented ably in their uncharted field, on which practically no books have been written. Untaught in any school but that of expediency, they have maintained themselves in the face of the criticism that always properly opposes any innovation—for their office is an intrusion into most church constitutions.

The administrative offices of the great religious communions have grown up, within the less than thirty years of the present century, in response to the recent growth of the great quantitative religious interests. America has been until recently a great

missionary territory. Funds and men have been offered in vast array for the evangelization of our people. The number of religious enterprises is great, and many of them are still dependent. The care of these great religious quantities has suddenly created immense organized interests. Problems of finance and of statesmanship have emerged which the mystic and the ascetic never dreamed of; and men have been found who without the help of scholars have administered thousands of devout workers and millions of money annually, with on the whole continued satisfaction.

Yet the very growth of this office is disquieting. Secretaries who came to office in New York or Boston or Philadelphia at the time of the Spanish-American War, in which one clerk or at most two were employed, now are succeeded by men who are at the head of an administrative force of fifty persons; their offices which then occupied two or three rooms now cover three floors of an office building. While the total of the funds they administer has been increased ten times over, the number of their administrative associates has been increased twenty times. This employment is more costly, in salaries and rent, than any other like expenditures chargeable to religious work; so that it is natural for pastors and missionaries to look with hostility, or else with envy, upon the work of national administrators.

There are honest men who would try to abolish

this office if they could see any way to do without it; and some of our confused minds would take a chance and abolish it anyway. Administration has won its place, upon a national scale. It will not be abolished. The most important thing is to learn how to do it aright, so that it may satisfy those served, while at the same time costing so little as to escape the charge of extravagance. Churches live upon small and voluntary contributions. We must save the world from repetition of the abuses of Peter's Pence.

A serious consideration arises from the present-day demand for the uniting of the Protestant churches. Protestant denominations have recently been engaged in the consolidation of their greater corporations. In one communion sixteen mission boards that had grown up in the nineteenth century were united, in the twentieth, into four; in another eight were consolidated into three. This process should make possible economies in administration. But the leader in one of these consolidations warned the people to look for no such immediate benefit.

If the greater communions of Protestantism in America again combine their efforts as they did in the Interchurch World Movement, they must contemplate the expenditure of immense sums for central administration, unless a better principle is found of managing the quantities of religious experience. This generation is not willing to repeat

the experiences of the Interchurch Movement; and it is fair to add that those who served in that movement would advise the younger generation against the possibilities of extravagance and the greater dangers of misunderstanding.

If the proposal is made in the next generation to unite the greater denominations, or any representative group of them, and to include those smaller kindred of theirs who would follow their examples, it will have to face a formidable objection, which would be sufficient to condemn the proposed union before its spiritual merits could be discussed, to the effect that the administrative expense would be scandalous.

All this throws a beam of light far back in history, to the Protestant Reformation; which may have been occasioned, if not caused by, the high cost of administering catholicity. The incomes of the popes and the cost of their establishments may have provoked the German merchants and barons quite as much as their sins offended Luther the monk and Erasmus the scholar.

Is there, then, no solution for the appalling problem of administering the growing spiritual aspirations of the Protestant churches? These tasks are not evil works; their performance ought not to be such as to create abuses. The problem is an economic one. The Protestant Church has not been accustomed to consult economists. There have been, however, competent economists among her

ministers. Malthus and Chalmers wrote books which scholars still use; and Chalmers was a practical economist, one of the few Protestant pastors who created schemes for administering city charity and missionary service. He, moreover, for years administered his scheme of help for the poor as a system, abolishing pauperism in his parish. He systematized also the payment of the pastors' salaries of his denomination in Scotland upon a self-respecting basis that has stood the test of nearly a century of use. In the whole field of Protestant administration there is nowhere else an influence equal to his, in the respects of capaciousness, mutual self-respect and economy.

That word self-respect deserves further remark. The American experience of church administration has grown out of our missionary history. The hundred years following those of Daniel Boone saw the continent possessed by a procession of settlers. Towns and cities have grown up at the cross-roads of this great population; which, starting in covered wagons, called into existence the trans-continental railways, created banks, stores, factories and a continental industrial structure. But by 1890 the good free land was all gone, and men began to redistribute farms in a process of land speculation which has unsettled the country churches. There are still settlers taking up irrigated acres and venturing upon cut-over lands; and we have as many home missionaries of the old

pioneer sort as we ever had. The greater part of home mission funds is, however, spent upon the support of pastors in country churches which have no longer a geographical adventure to dignify them. The downtown sections of the cities, invaded often by immigrants, are unable to maintain their churches. Here the work of the settled pastor is needed; and not that of the pioneers who came and went on horseback. These ministers and their churches do not desire to be regarded as missionaries. To treat them as such is to rob them of their self-respect and to disregard the nature of their office altogether.

To them the boards have said, "Come to self-support; make your churches pay your salary, and free the boards from the grant-in-aid which is reserved for the missionary." For these churches this is impossible. Country churches are generally unable to support their pastors; and downtown city churches have not the resources wherewith to sustain their establishments in the midst of ever poorer congregations. There is probably a larger proportion of churches of the larger denominations dependent upon national administration of funds than were so dependent in the days of the great migrations to the West.

To ask these churches to come to self-support is futile. To insist upon it, is to close the greater number of them. To pay them an administrative missionary dole, as a supplement of the local con-

tributions, this charity being determined by the judgment of a committee of their equals, is to demean them all and to degrade their office so that high-spirited men will not accept service. The policy of self-support should be changed to one whose objective is self-respect. Instead of the secretaries of boards demanding that they "come to self-support," they should so change their program of administration that they may invite pastors of dependent churches to mutual self-respect.

This is the situation of the country churches and those in the downtown sections of cities, from both of which the original members are moving away. I do not refer to those which are ever being built to serve new populations. They may still be cared for as missionary enterprises. There will always be abundant funds, and the Lord is ever calling devoted men and women to do this missionary work. Indeed there will be more, when it is made clear that none of these funds will be spent upon the established churches attended by conventional people.

As to country people, it has been made plain so that no man can mistake who reads, that they cannot support their churches. Government surveys in farm economics have put this beyond doubt, if the ever-recurring troubles and protestations of farmers did not proclaim it. It has been proven also in recent authoritative publications that those who attend small country churches are already pay-

ing more per person, and are making greater sacrifices for their churches, than are the members of the big churches in city and town.

Remedies proposed are of two classes. The first is good as far as it goes, that there be bigger parishes. But experience shows that this does not bring the churches to self-support; rather it gives occasion for greater contributions from the boards. The other remedy is that we abandon the open country churches altogether and center the work of religion in the towns. This is a counsel of failure. It has been the remedy so far applied, and the result is that one farmer in five goes to church and four out of five do not. The efforts of the supervisors of our churches have been for the past eighteen years expended upon parish programs, which are excellent. The value of these programs will be permanent. But they do not solve the problem of national administration, whose objective is self-support; for they do not support themselves, and the pastors leave the country for the city when they can, showing that the country church, as administered, does not have the respect of the younger and stronger ministers. The end of all our administration to date is that we have evangelized the countryside in the nineteenth century, and in the twentieth we are letting it go back to paganism.

In Great Britain and Ireland the open country churches are not abandoned. On every road, far out among the farms, they stand, beautifully kept,

and beside each of them is a manse or rectory in which resides a pastor. The changes that are affecting us have had their full power in these older countries—but they have not wrought the effects there which are predicted from their operation here. This is often the result of local circumstances, there as here; for we have many excellent country churches that are cited by persons of limited observation as proof that the American country church is in excellent condition. In England as well as here there are prosperous farming sections, the place of deposit of great natural and of great actual wealth. Some churches have been endowed; some are financed by great families.

These instances have nothing to do with the national administration of religious work, with which we are at present concerned. It is by an administrative provision for the general welfare and self-respect of country pastors that the British country churches so generally survive and are well served. For this provision the state is to a degree responsible in the past; but the greater influence, which does not pass away with time, is the outgrowth of the wise economy projected among the free churches by Thomas Chalmers.

When the Free Church was born in Scotland, in 1843, the country church problem arose, by reason of the secession of ministers and churches from the comfortable support of the Established Church. Chalmers proposed that the city churches, which

had the wealthier congregations, as well as the country churches, many of which were very poor, should equalize their salaries through the creation of a great national fund. Each pastor was to receive from this fund the same salary payments. To this fund each church was to contribute not a voluntary and unreliable amount, but a required quota. After paying its quota, which was determined not by private judgment or that of a committee, but by a rule that worked automatically, each congregation could pay its own pastor as much as it chose. Naturally the city churches paid to their own pastors ample stipends. But for more than eighty years the minister in the remotest valley or hamlet in the Highlands has received by this plan an adequate living. The payment made by the fund to ministers is thus not a supplementary dole but an initial payment, and its administration is the first administrative care of the local congregation.

This system is working today, among several denominations in the British Isles, with some adaptations. It has had the effect of relieving the pastor from the humiliation of not knowing whether he "should ask for a grant again"; and of wondering whether he can get it if he asks. It requires few salaried officers to administer it. For if the local congregation withholds its quarterly payment of the quota the fund holds back the pastor's quarterly check. So that the national fund does not

have to borrow from the banks in order to make its advances to the pastors. The plan administers itself in many of the respects in which our national funds require painful and embarrassing decisions by officials in office, far from the local field concerned.

Now, I know well that what has been done in Scotland may be imitated in Ireland and England, but "will not work in America." I begin with that conviction. But we have inherited from the British Isles most of the structure of our older American denominations, and there is no necessary reason why we may not devise ways of our own in the light of their later example. Certainly American national administration of religious work is becoming burdensome. More than one conscientious secretary has withdrawn from the employment of Home Mission Boards because his conscience would not permit him further to serve under the present system. It is becoming almost impossible to enlist ministers of education and standing in the service of country churches. Some way must be found by which to redeem our national administration from the reproach under which it lies in the eyes of students and thoughtful observers.

It is characteristic of good administration that it makes for the self-respect of those whose interests are administered. Ours is demeaning the pastorates among the poor. It is likewise confusing our ideal of home missions, which has been the

great characteristic American heritage in religion. There are some who assert that we will not be able permanently to secure contributions for the always necessary missionary work, for which the Home Mission Boards were created, unless we free that interest from the confusion arising because of the expenditure of mission funds upon non-missionary work. We need a national administration of the interests of country church which will dignify that institution and attract into it men of first-class mind and adequate education.

I venture therefore to propose as a solution of our country church problem, upon a national scale, the following elements of a plan. There is in this, of course, nothing official but only the expression of a personal opinion as to a method which my observation leads me to believe would work successfully. If this or some other modification of Thomas Chalmers' principle of equalized salaries is ever set up, the problems of the local parish, with which we have been hitherto concerned, may be left to the devotion and intelligence of pastors and superintendents for their permanent solution.

First, let the pastors of the strongest churches of a section of the country, as for example Pennsylvania, New York and New Jersey, be assembled by the Council of Churches to consider and devise a way for the equalization of pastors' salaries.

Second, let them set up a treasury at a central city, as Philadelphia or New York, to which shall

be sent the quota payments of all churches; from which shall be paid the level amount, the same in all cases, which shall be sufficient to sustain a pastor after the missionary beginnings of his church are ended.

Third, let them determine with the help of all the experience available, calling to their assistance economists and administrators of education and business as well as of religion, what this equal payment to the pastor's salary should be; probably a sum between \$800 and \$1,500. It should not be the whole minimum salary, for a non-missionary church should pay a considerable sum to its pastor.

Fourth, let them decide upon the rules by which quotas shall be determined. Among the Irish Presbyterians a church must pay, if its pastor's salary exceeds the equivalent of \$2,000, a quota equal to the amount paid by the Fund to all pastors, and most of these churches pay more. A church whose pastor receives in all less than \$2,000 is required to pay two-fifths of the amount received from the Fund. The American quota should be determined by the total salary of the pastor, since that salary is the best automatic measure of the ability of the church to attain to a level of payment to the fund.

Fifth, let these leading pastors then commit this plan to a selected board of laymen and ministers, who shall serve without pay and shall meet once a year to determine upon adjustments of the plan.

Sixth, let the plan grow from the voluntary accession of churches to it. It may well be committed for a time to the initial administration of a group of laymen who shall set the conditions, and the time at which—these conditions being fulfilled—the plan shall go into effect. If it commends itself to these men and there is need of a central fund to stabilize the working of the plan, there will be no difficulty in securing ample contributions.

Seventh, this plan might be interdenominational. Indeed, it may be the means of initiating that desired union of churches for which good men pray. For the board might at its annual meeting receive into the plan every congregation recommended by three or four of the denominational supervisors. Yet the plan could, with lesser idealism to commend it and some added difficulties, be put in force by a synod or association or conference among all its churches or among those who under certain rules should voluntarily associate themselves with it. I am not proposing that at the first it be national in scope, or that a national treasury administer it; though in its objectives and in its appeal it is a national scheme for sustaining the churches of the dispersed country population and of the congested populations of cities.

Eighth, this plan would require for its administration only a competent treasurer with clerks, and one secretary, of the type of man who now serves as the clerk of any one of the great democratic

communions. It would be administered by the public and open force of self-interest governed by the experience of mutual self-respect.

I have said enough about the country church as a source and spring of our national life; and others are better advocates than I am of that contention. I plead here only for such national administration of American rural faith in its most frequent organized expressions, the country churches, as will give to the country pastor self-respect, pride in his occupation and freedom from worldly care to serve his Master as he desires to serve.

X

COUNTRY JOY AND SORROW

OCCASIONS of deep feeling come to country people at their own times and do not have to be sought. Men wait for them and regard them as interpreters of life. In cities men desire a joy every day, or at least one a week; so they bargain for it, enjoy it—and forget it. Sorrow they evade if possible, and when it comes they make as little of it as possible. In the country men celebrate their sorrows and enjoy them. A funeral is an occasion of general interest, just as a wedding is, in the country; but in cities men turn their faces away from a funeral, while those who mourn hasten their mournings; and they rejoice in a wedding. Death and sex, birth, sickness and decay are potent factors in country life.

Thus in older countries which have a rural basis, as France or Ireland, the old man is an acknowledged force. With us an old man who maintains his place as a power is an object of surprise; if he is observed at all it is as an amazing example of vigor. Not so country people and the older culture, to whose mind an old man is not to be expected to be vigorous so much as wise, learned in

traditions, dignified. He is not to be tested by the standards of young men.

All this is written to say that the country way of life is the older way. It is for those who desire to look backward as well as forward. Village folk share this backward look. They, too, have some love of the past. But the modern great city imposes upon its people the delusion of progress. It destroys and forgets. It teaches its children to live in the moment, to be efficient, "to get by," to know only enough for the present purpose and, above all, to enjoy.

Among country people there is no joy without its background of truth. It is for this reason that they surprise a city-bred person by enjoying a funeral. It is not because they have nothing else to do; indeed, they often ignore a play-festival to go to a funeral—or an auction of the goods of an old homestead. The constant joys of the older culture are connected with work. Their "frolics" are often no more than labors made pretty and voluntary. Nothing will get out more men in my neighborhood than a day's "working" with pick and shovel, if it is work upon some public construction that depends upon their voluntary labor, such as a church or a community center. The old "bees" among the Pennsylvania Germans were—I suppose still are—assemblies at which the women sew and cook indoors and the men erect a barn outdoors, or cut up a wood-pile. Such serious joys

have their satisfaction in the idealization of reality, the hilarity of labor. Like the funeral, they are expressions of the truth.

There is, therefore, a better intelligence exercised in life in the country or in small villages than in our bigger cities. I do not say more intelligence, but of a better sort. We will know less worthy things, and we will know more things, as cities grow and as farm people are fewer. For those who live on the land must know what all men have to know. They have no deputies to think for them about death and ownership, birth and debt. They have to be versed in the mysteries of sex and of sickness themselves, for the specialists in these matters are not usually at hand. So that in making our philosophy and restating our faith we will have to depend upon the services of country men and women. Pastors and teachers have ever been the rural thinkers. What a pity, then, that so few of them in America live in rural manses and teacher-ages, that they may know the ways of cattle, the meaning of land tenure and the power of weather. European farmers have their ministers with them, who live in rural homes, rear their children in the open country, and are wise in the wisdom of God's creation. American ministers and pedagogues generally have their minds in the city, and give to country people the message they get from the city, whose philosophy is that of human enjoyment, rather than of the divine joy in suffering.

I remember a country funeral at which many of us met, whom long years had parted. A young mother had died, after the birth of her first son. Two days had been allowed for adequate announcement, so that there were those who came a thousand miles to that burial, and all the houses of the countryside were at least represented in the company that filled the great farmhouse during the prayers and the sermon. Three ministers attended, though only one was appointed to be in charge, and the voices of all three were heard in the house and at the grave. The place of burial was in sight of the house door; out of which sturdy neighbors bore her body, as her husband followed, with her mother beside him, to the place of burial on the little hill where their people rest. The quiet procession wound up the gently sloping road, pitiful and tenderly slow, no labor spared in bearing the burden of death among them, no steps hurried, while the eyes of all followed with a sympathy deeper than tears.

Such occasions are to the people of the older culture times of joy to be always remembered; because they exercise the deepest human intelligence, the oldest human experience. They contemplate interests common to all mankind, kinship, neighborhood, family, ownership, debt, love and sorrow. They dramatize human life and play upon the tragedy in notes to which the heart of the savage would respond alike with that of the wisest seer.

Then I journeyed once to the country in which the horse is king. Limestone soils make possible here the growth of blue grass, always green, a pasture for unbelievable numbers of cattle, sheep and horses. Herds of perfect animals fed in the old fields which had not known a plough for generations. Once in a while we saw that fairest sight to a countryman's eyes, a sloping field on which were grazing mares with their foals. My driver recited their pedigrees as we passed along, and the distinguished names of their owners and breeders. One of them was pointed out as the fastest animal ever driven in a competitive race; a quiet dam she was, with her wide-eyed colt upon his long stilted legs at her side.

We took our way to the stables where "the greatest horse of all time" was kept, and his hostlers were proud to lead him out for us into his paddock. I was glad he looked the part, in his perfection of bone and muscle and majesty of neck and chest. He had all the parts of a king of the creation which God has made and man has continued. He was kind, willing to pose, knowing as well as his grooms did that we came to worship, and were looking at him to remember what a beast could be at his highest. After he had posed for us, with his head up, he pretended to graze for a moment and thus got his halter-strap extended, whereupon he whirled and leaped upon one of our number who had been encouraged by the groom to

caress him, and playfully bit his shoulder. The force and speed with which he acted and the delicacy of the blow showed that he could have broken the man's neck. None of us needed to be told that he could win any race; and the wearer of the torn coat had something to remember, and for his comrades to envy.

In the city they showed me, the Sunday following, "the Horsemen's Church." Staid elders and their wives, whose churches condemn racing as an evil sport, pointed out with delight the costly edifice erected to the glory of God by horse-owners as expression of their gratitude to the pastor who had defended their occupation against adverse legislation.

Why are there so few country pastors who love horses and know the care and breeding of cattle? Why has the shepherd no voice in the pulpit except the quoted words of David? Why has the vineyard no exhortation to devout men since the interpretation by the Master Himself? The life men live in the cities as well as in the country must be lived in terms of wheat and of the fruits of the orchard. Yet our pastors live too generally in the railroad towns. Their minds are cabined in cities and fed upon daily newspapers of the greater cities; not upon the universal language of life in the open country.

Said a great philosopher and mystic to me this year, "City people and the workers in the great

industries use a vocabulary hard and specialized, with none of the great human words upon their tongues. So they do not have preparation for reading or hearing the Bible, which is the noblest and most august language of mankind. They cannot be religious or know what religion means, because they have not the vocabulary of religion, which is the highest utterance of man to man. Only in country places do men converse in the small talk of the mysterious experiences of love and death, of life and immortality."

So it seems to me that our greatest American need is of country preachers who live as pastors, shepherds "of all that live on an area of land." They will be taught by modern science, but will redeem learning from its present slavery to commerce. It will not be material to them, but vital; for it will be the expression of sex, not in passion, as in the city theatre, but in terms of marriage; it will idealize the atom not in the machine alone but in the mysterious chemistry of the leaf and the root and the flower.

We have a few such men. But I know none who can preach, and very few who can pray, in terms of the life of man in the country. As I think over the long list of faithful and consecrated ministers who preach to country people, only perhaps one in twenty of them lives in the country with his hearers. There is one prophetic man in New England, one in Kentucky, several contented and steady

shepherds of souls in Pennsylvania; two in New York who have seen the joy and sorrow of the country but cannot say it—except that they cry out in indignation at those who do not!—and one missionary in Tennessee whose life brings tears to those who know him—and I have never heard him preach.

The voice of the love of beasts and trees is rare even in the poets; though one hears it in Emerson, in Whitman and in Vachel Lindsay. But it speaks loud in the Old Testament. The joy of the sorrow of death is heard only in the great old bards and in the ballads of old England which the mountaineers still sing. It will never be heard in country pulpits until biologists and physicists open the windows of their laboratories and begin to sing and to preach. When the Lord gives them utterance the country preachers will have the eloquence of beast and man, of death and breeding, in terms of creative expression.

There is, however, in the country a new enjoyment of life for which we are indebted to the city, to the development of national business and to world-wide standards of living. It expresses itself in the purchase and use of industrial appliances which make life easier, and in the organization of community life upon a scale of dignity and enjoyment unknown to the old isolated neighborhood. The first of these makes for a stronger and happier home life upon the farm; and the second for toler-

ance and a humanitarian spirit. One strengthens the farm family; to which it might be supposed organized industry would be inimical, since the farm is the only great family industry left. The other makes for the creation of satisfying social life and of autonomous societies in which all the spiritual needs of neighbors may be satisfied together.

It is a strange paradox that late in the industrial revolution, which transformed the household industries of our great-grandfathers, there should arise a monster industry in the manufacture of automobiles, and another "octopus" of capital in the telephone service, both of which have contributed to the permanence and self-sufficiency of the farm-family. But so it is. The one had shortened the roads, and the other has eliminated distance in the act of communication. They have come into use on farms generally in America during this century. They have made marketing and social life possible for those who live upon our isolated farms, and they have effected the creation of a system of roads, for the lack of which country life leaders groaned and despaired fifteen years ago. It is now easy and pleasant to live upon a farm, and it is said that half the people in the cities envy the farmer his way of life.

When one adds the radio to the conveniences of the farm household, for which a devout man would fondly believe kind Providence had devised it, one realizes that to the joys and advantages of country

life there is brought the information and artistic enjoyment of the whole world. Besides, there is the thrill of handling the mystery of the air familiarly and touching delicately into action the forces which magicians of modern science are bringing to our command. There is a new pride for the country boy when he has installed this magic box and fixed the sounding discs to his grandfather's ears, that he may hear the great preacher or singer whom he had in vain longed for years to hear. There is an abiding satisfaction to the homekeeping woman, and to her men folk after the day's work, in turning on the loud-speaker, modulated to tones consistent with the passing conversation of the evening, and listening to the concert in some preferred city, or to the merriment of a dinner to which only the great of the earth are invited.

With these appliances have come electric light, washing-machines, farm machinery which enable a farm-boy of fifteen to do the work of all his great-grandfathers and their hired men upon one of the fields of the estate. The house may be heated with economy in all its rooms at small cost, to the abolishment forever of the specters of the cold bed and the chilly parlor. There is not one of the sordid tasks of the old farm work that is not lightened, and made a work of the brain and of skill, by some machine supplied to the farm at a price by modern factories.

There are farmers in all parts of the country who

are able to purchase these appliances. A great editor of a farm paper has declared that in the Middle West "about one farmer in four is prospering." Even in favored sections of the Southern Highlands, it is said by an informed observer, "one farmer in five is doing well." A greater number are buying automobiles, whether they can afford them or not. So that there is a widespread experience in our day of the industrialization of the farm and its admittance into the standards of living which are demanded in all lands as essentials of life. In the vicinity of great cities, and in certain of the Eastern states also, farmers are generally prosperous and able to enjoy this standard, if they have the love of the country which is the first essential to living there.

But the trouble is that most farmers and villagers are yet without the means to enter this happy array. There is great discontent today among them, which it is reasonable to believe is caused not so much by inability to get food and lodging as to secure these desirable and essential enjoyments. The very pressure of these new wants makes for discontent. Even in those who secure these satisfactions there is a restlessness caused by the allurements of a manner of life wonderful and different, which is possible now within the very doors. This discontent is the new sorrow, which makes the joy of country living a troublous passion. It is the pain of a new birth, and it is the

agony of a new death. But the farm household will survive it as it has known how to bear the simpler sufferings that all men know.

The other new joy of the country is that of the community. We used to live in neighborhoods, and they were often small and mean, always intolerant. There was in the old neighborhood, so long as it remained a place of kindred and friends, a compensation for its littleness in its nobility and pride of family. But with the migrations to the West and to the cities, during the redistribution of land of the last two generations, newcomers have come in, and men have felt the necessity of manners suitable to a less intimate enjoyment of life. Business has to be done with the strangers, and the coöperative method has offered itself as a bond of effective marketing and banking, for those who live together upon a common habitat. Community houses have been erected in which families could meet upon an equality who would not be comfortable together in domestic intercourse.

Forms of non-committal social intercourse have been devised by which one is not committed to marrying his daughter to the son of the man on the next farm. Play-festivals and pageants are organized in which all can take part who have an interest in the countryside. Home-comings have become general, to which the families once in residence may return; settlers' picnics have given occasion for the old men to tell the story of the old hard

days to their grandsons and to the crude immigrants now living on the old homesteads. Out of all these we have dimly become aware of something growing upon our minds, which we call the community.

The world has come very near to the little hamlet. I suppose it is the terrifying and formidable world-spirit that is moving upon us, as it agitated the isolated manors and castles of Europe in the eleventh century. We hate it and we love it, as they also did. We make laws to restrain our children from knowing it; and we set off in a car with the whole family loaded in, to see its far cities and to talk with people from other places in the camps beside the great highways. We attend Chautauquas to learn more of this greatest human passion. A new spirit is abroad upon the open country. It is well for the people who dwell together in a geographical nearness to one another to build at the center of common meeting schools and church-houses and community houses, in which the voice of the great world can be heard and the values of all human life can be weighed.

For this, like other joys, is made up of pain and pleasure. To know the world and to love it as God loves it is to joy in it and to bear its cross of sorrows. Only in the country is there time and the disposition to see the reality of this passion.

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